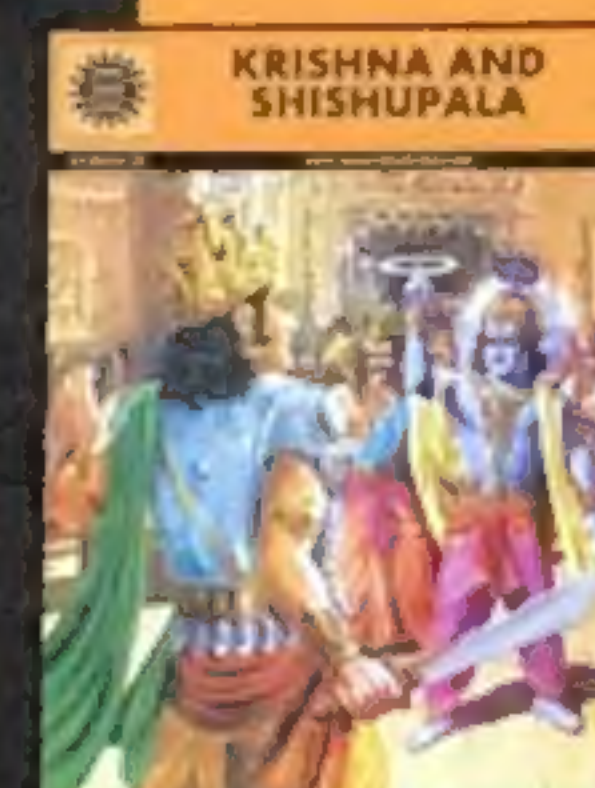


EPICS &
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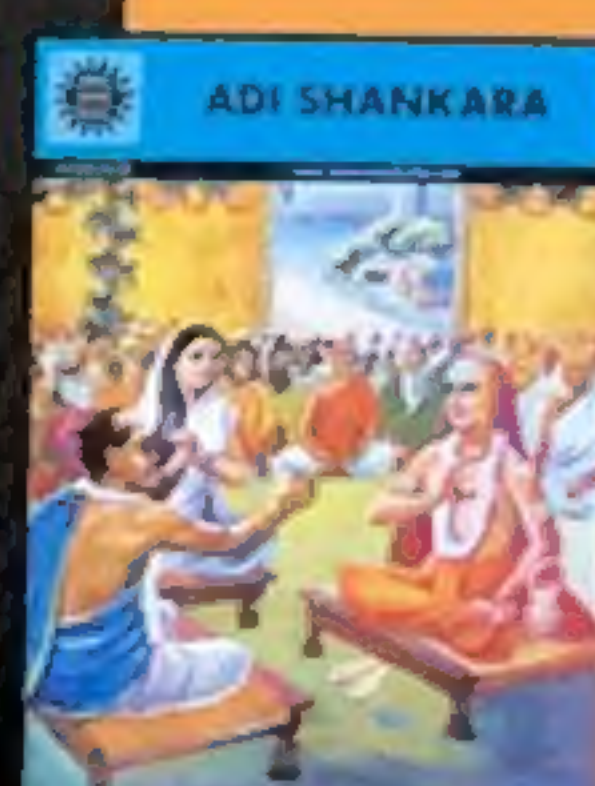
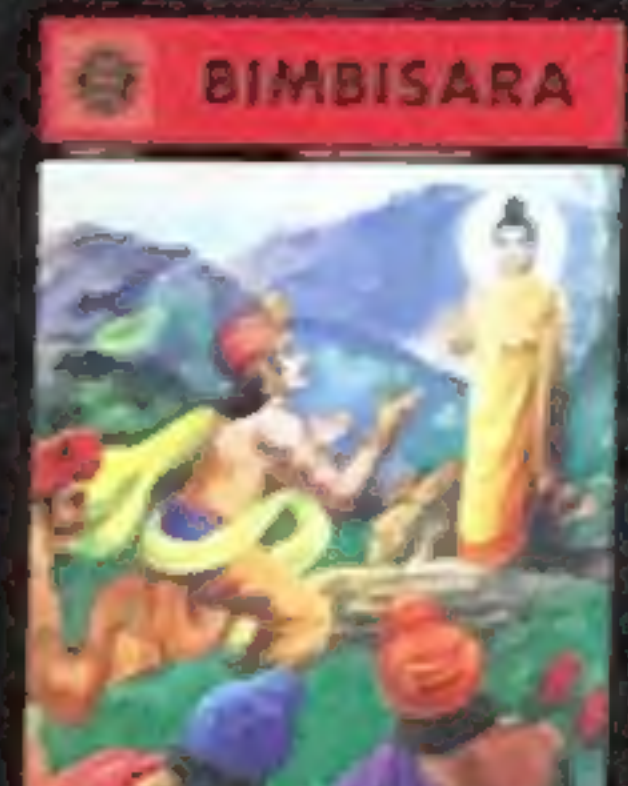
NAHUSHA

Even though Nahusha, the son of King Ayus and Queen Indumati, was spirited away at birth to be killed by the demon, Hunda, he lived on to achieve immortality. Married to Ashokasundari, the beautiful daughter of Shiva and Parvati, he was elected to be the king of heaven. And then his mortal mind succumbed to the sin of pride. The stories of Nahusha are taken from the Padma Purana and the Mahabharata.

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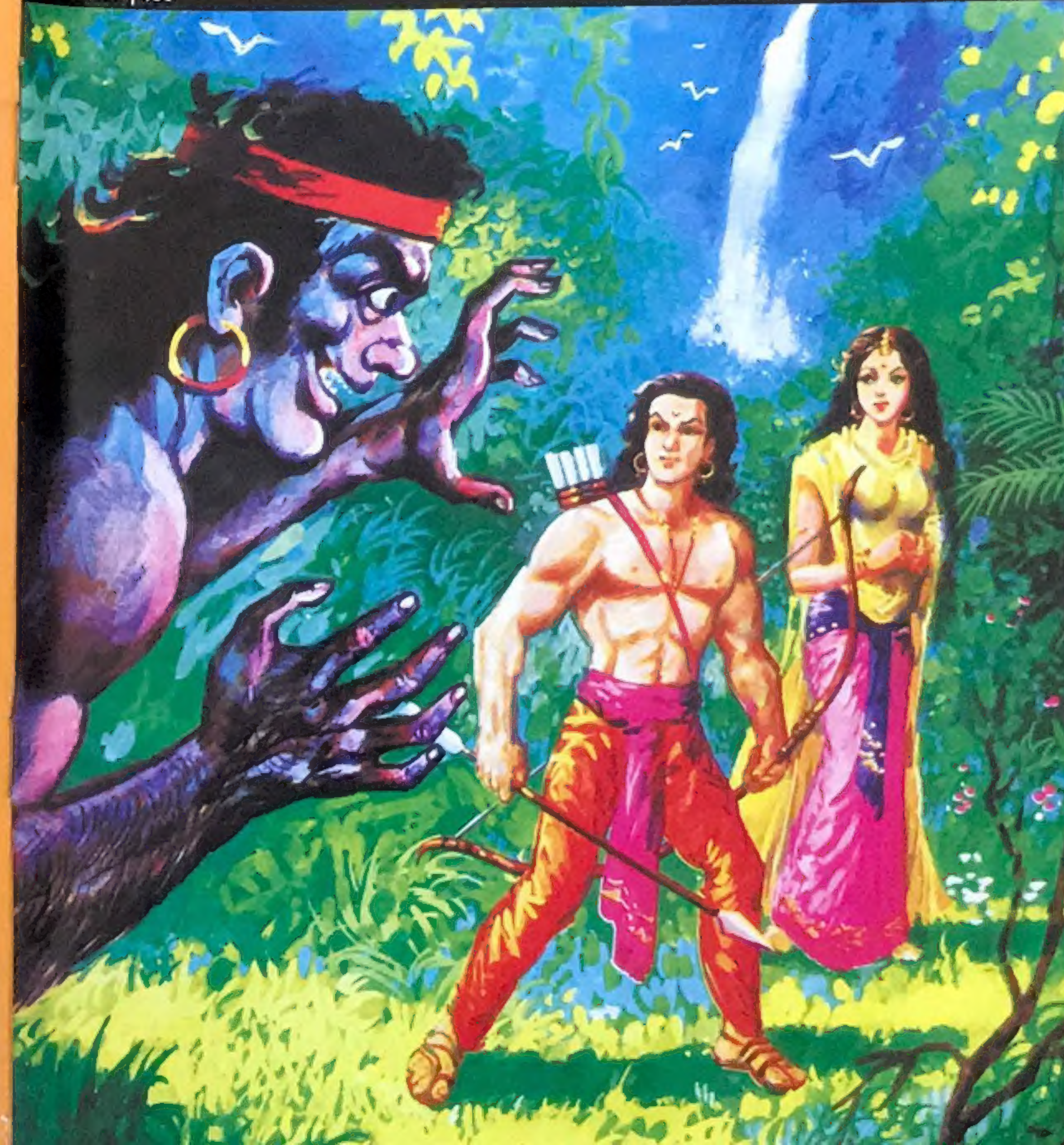
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NAHUSHA

HE BECAME THE KING OF HEAVEN

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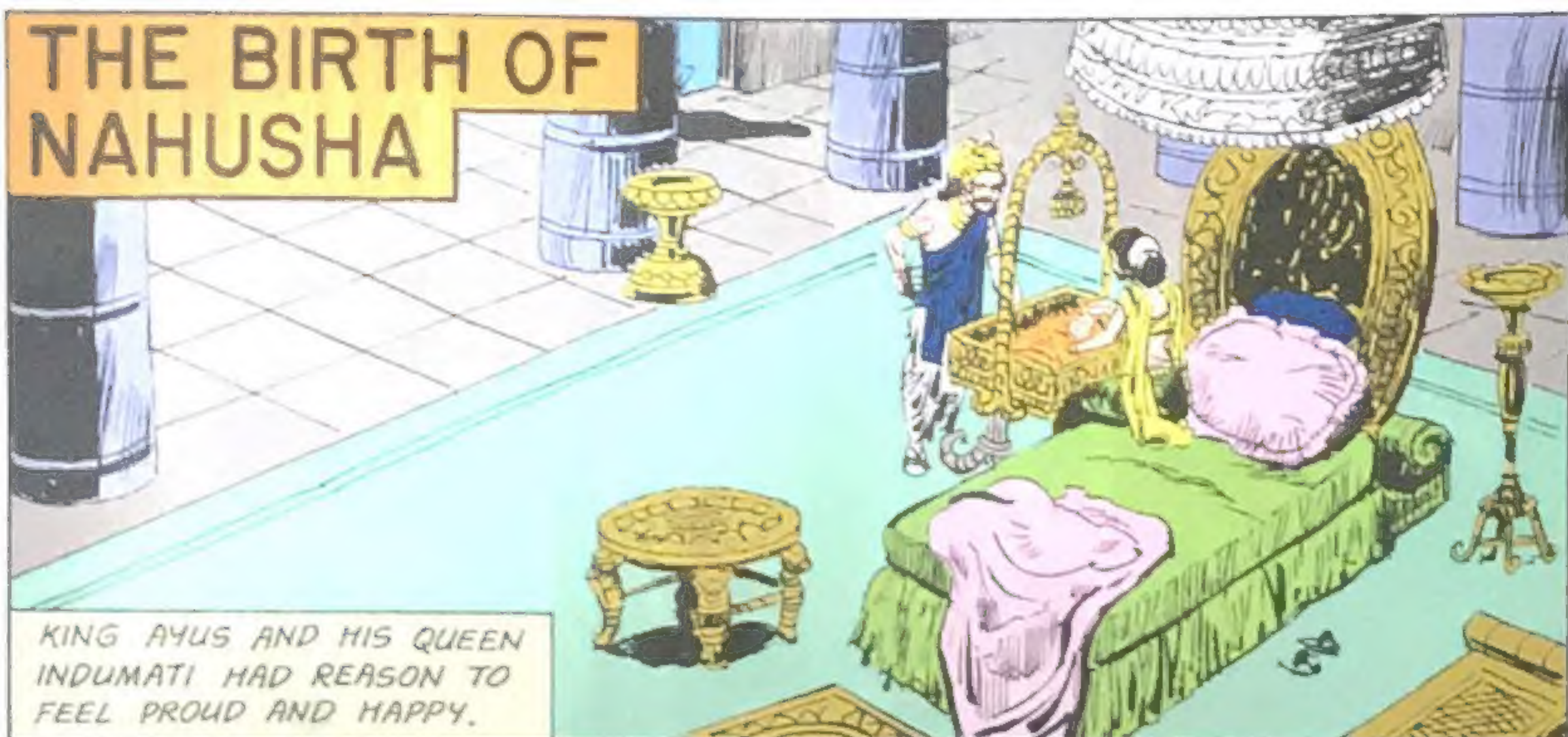


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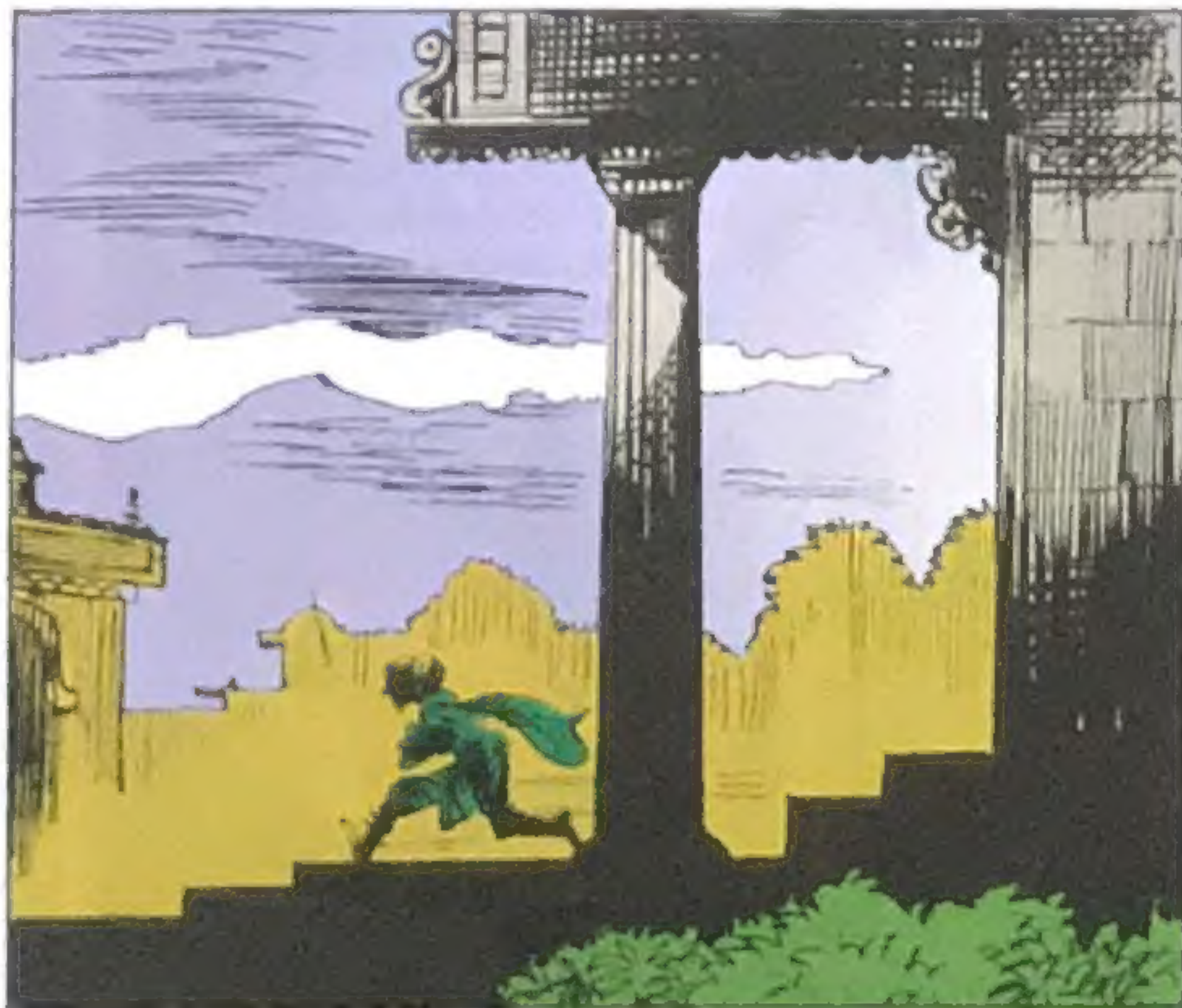


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THE BIRTH OF NAHUSHA



KING AYUS AND HIS QUEEN INDUMATI HAD REASON TO FEEL PROUD AND HAPPY.



THE NEXT MOMENT—



THE MAID WAS NONE OTHER THAN THE ASURA HUNDA.



AFTER RETURNING TO HIS PALACE...



...HE HANDED OVER THE CHILD TO HIS WIFE.



WHEN THE DISH WAS READY—



MEANWHILE IN A CORNER OF THE KITCHEN.



SOON—

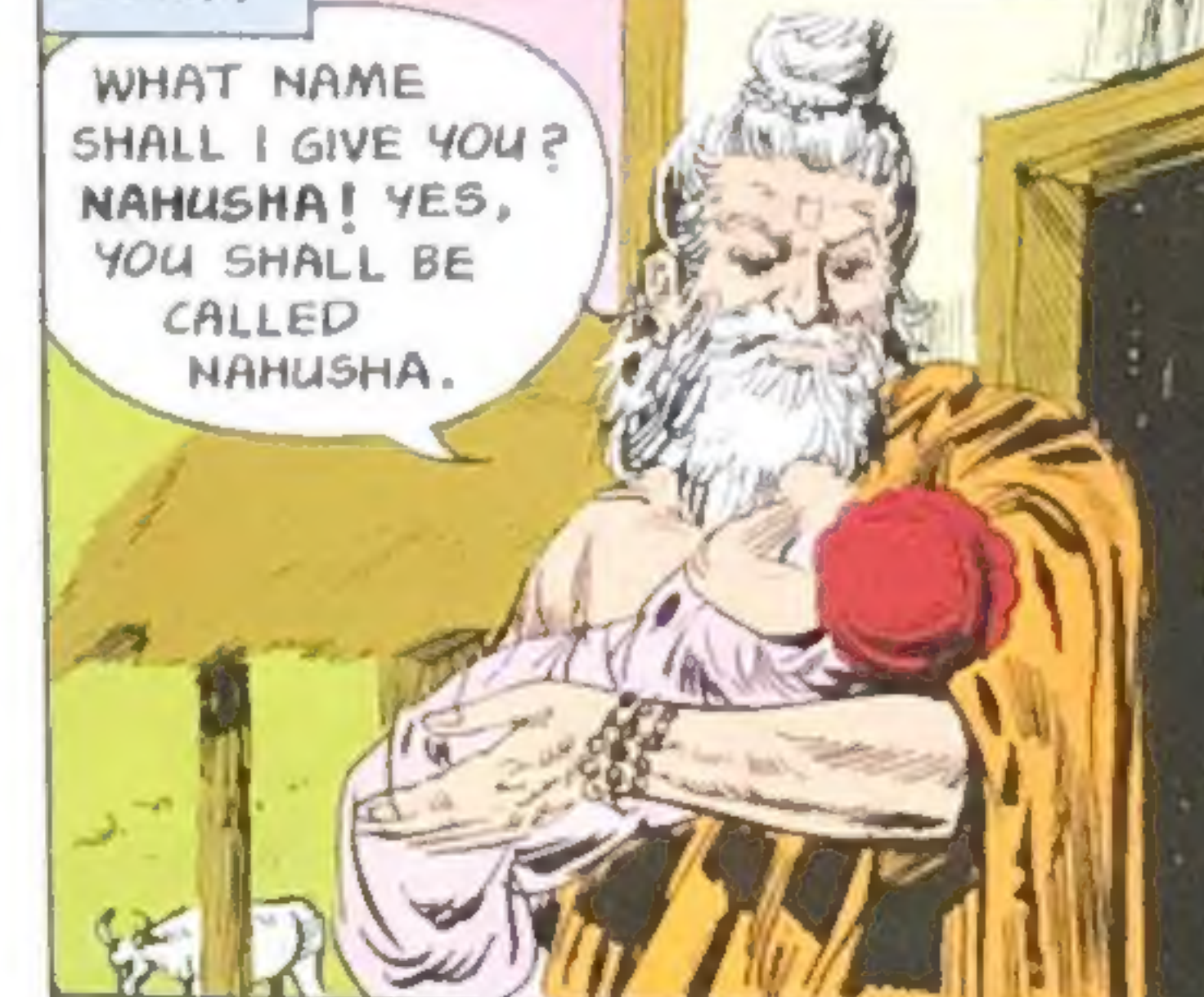


NAHUSHA

DAWN HAD JUST FLUSHED THE SKY. THE VENERABLE SAGE VASISHTHA WAS SETTING OUT FOR THE RIVER WHEN—



HE PICKED UP THE CHILD AND BY HIS SPIRITUAL POWER DIVINED ITS STORY.



MEANWHILE—



THE YEARS PASSED. NAHUSHA WAS NOW A YOUNG MAN. ONE DAY, WHEN HE WAS COLLECTING SAMIT* FOR VASISHTHA'S SACRIFICIAL FIRE, HE HEARD THE SWEET STRAINS OF MUSIC.

O NAHUSHA...

WHAT'S THAT?

POOR NAHUSHA...

IT WAS A GROUP OF DEVACHARANAS† SINGING.

...HIS PARENTS STILL GRIEVE FOR THE LOST SON...

...WHO WAS SEIZED BY HUNDA-SURA, BUT WAS SAVED BY A COOK'S COMPASSION...

NAHUSHA RAN BACK TO THE HERMITAGE.

WHEN VASISHTHA CONFIRMED THEIR TALE —

THAT EVIL ASURA SHOULD BE SLAIN.

I SHALL KILL HIM-NOW!

BLESS ME, NOBLE SAGE.

MAY SUCCESS BE YOURS.

* TWIGS OFFERED IN VARIOUS RITES TO AGNI

† CELESTIAL MUSICIANS

AS NAHUSHA VENTURED DEEP INTO THE FORESTS IN SEARCH OF HUNDA, A BEAUTIFUL MAIDEN APPEARED BEFORE HIM.

WHO ARE YOU?

I AM ASHOKA-SUNDARI. KNOW ME AS THE WOMAN DESTINED TO BE YOUR WIFE.

"ONE DAY, WHEN LORD SHIVA AND PARVATI WERE IN NANDANA VANA, PARVATI DECIDED TO TEST THE KALPA VRIKSHA*."

UM... I WANT... A LOVELY BABY GIRL!

"TO HER DELIGHT THE WISH CAME TRUE."

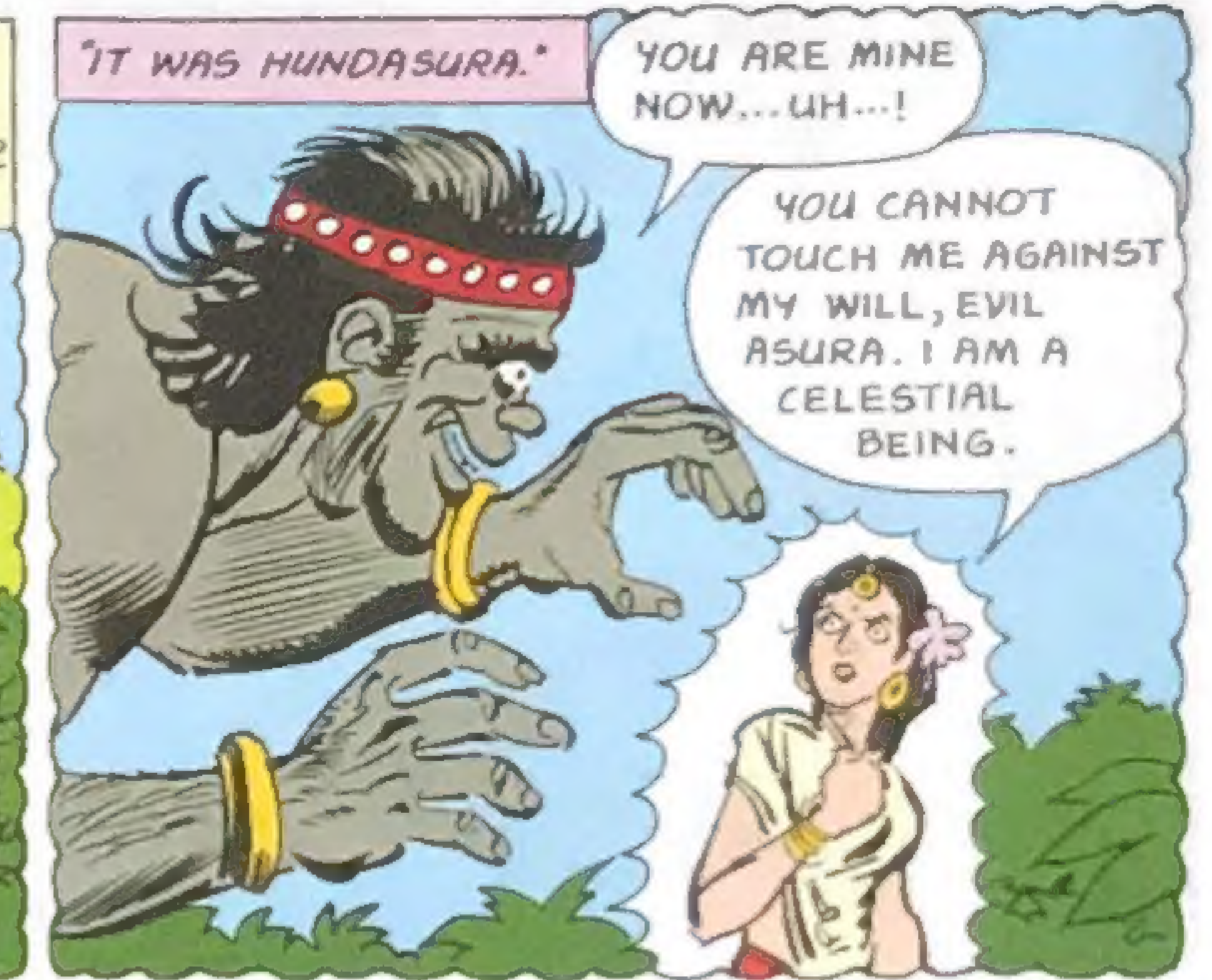
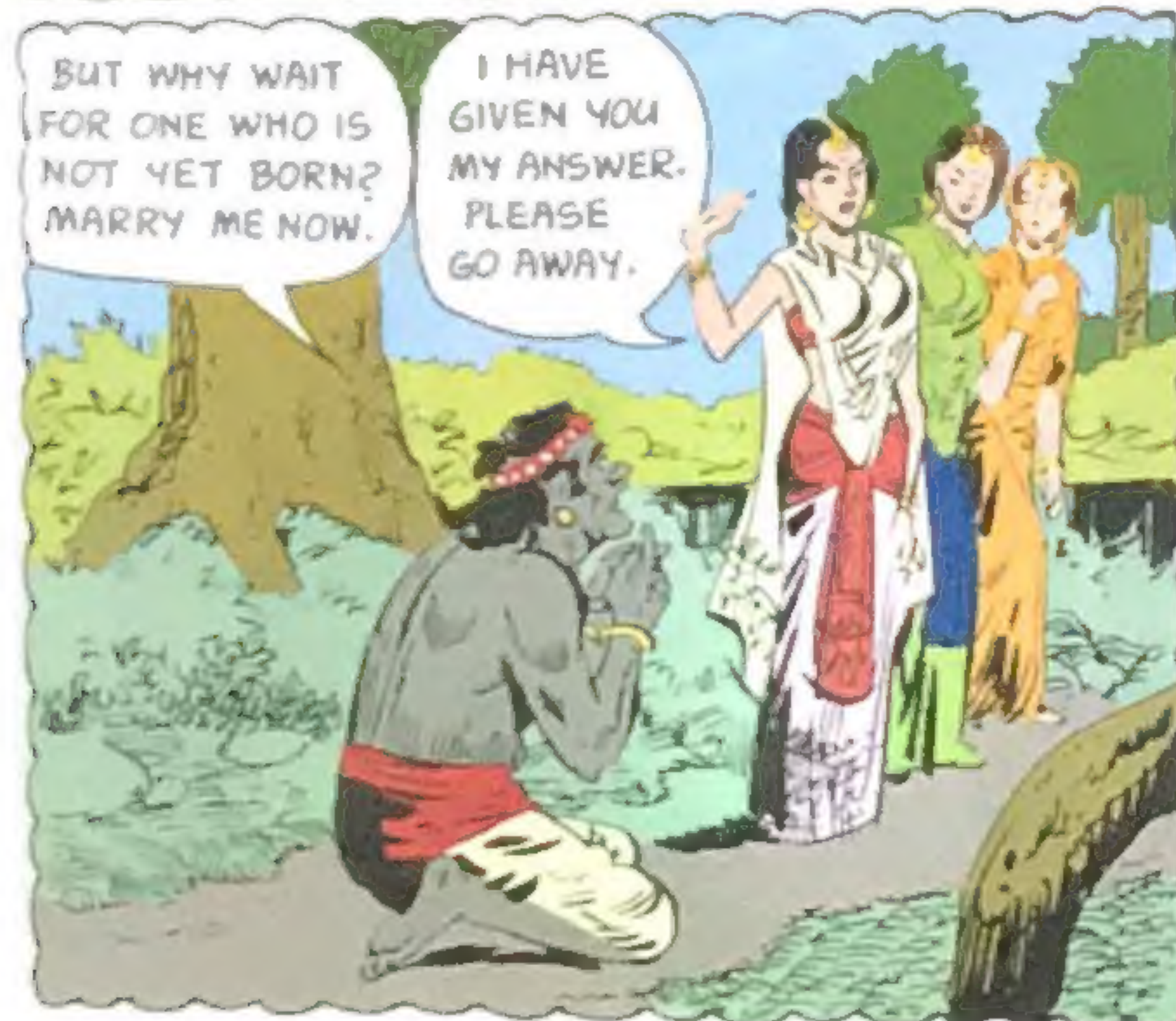
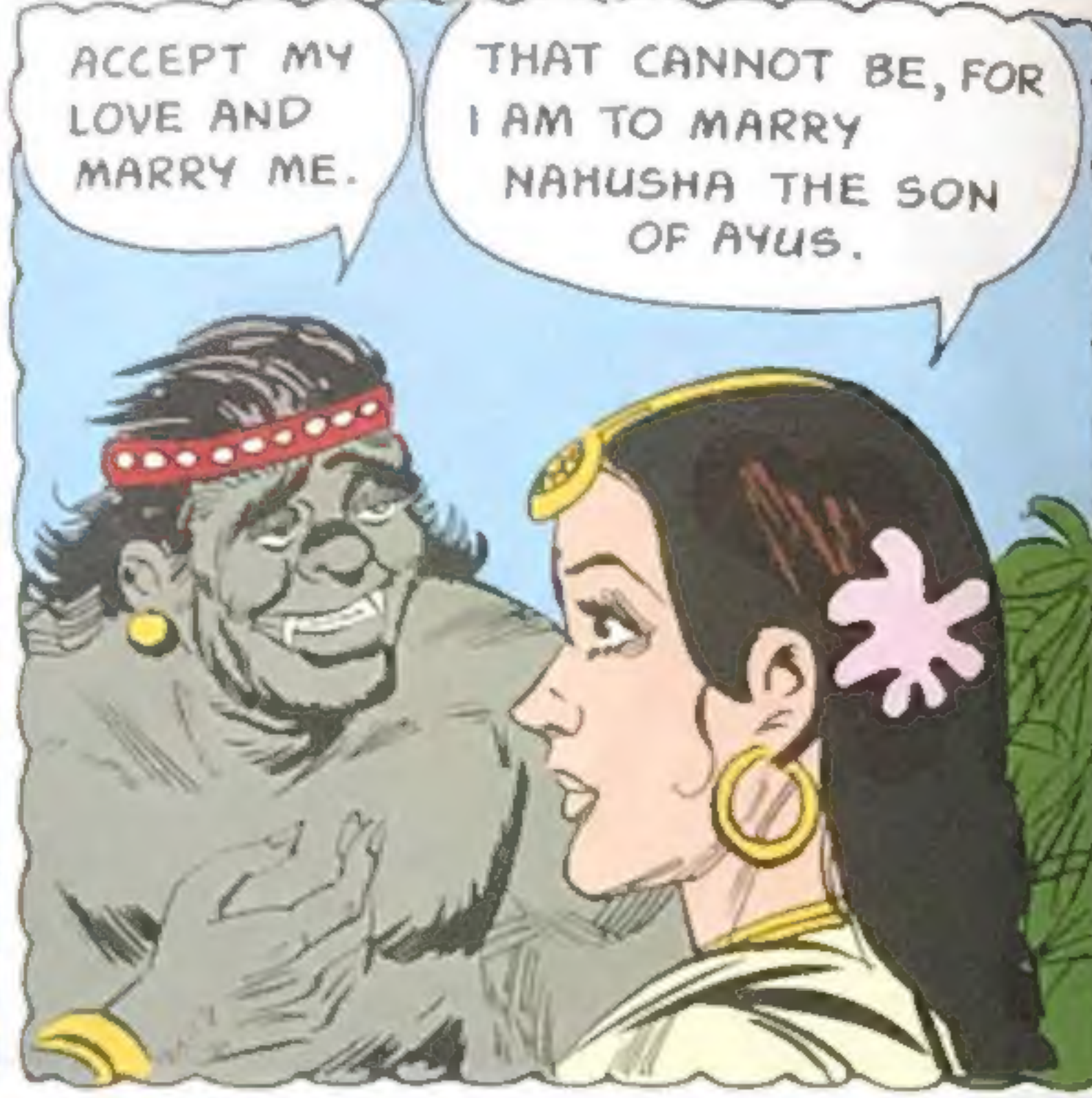
"I WAS THAT BABY."

I SHALL CALL HER ASHOKASUNDARI.

"I GREW UP AS PARVATI'S DAUGHTER. THE GODDESS IN HER BENEVOLENCE GRANTED ME A BOON."

NAHUSHA THE SON OF AYUS WHO WILL BE EQUAL TO INDRA, KING OF THE DEVAS, SHALL BE YOUR HUSBAND.

* WISH FULFILLING TREE



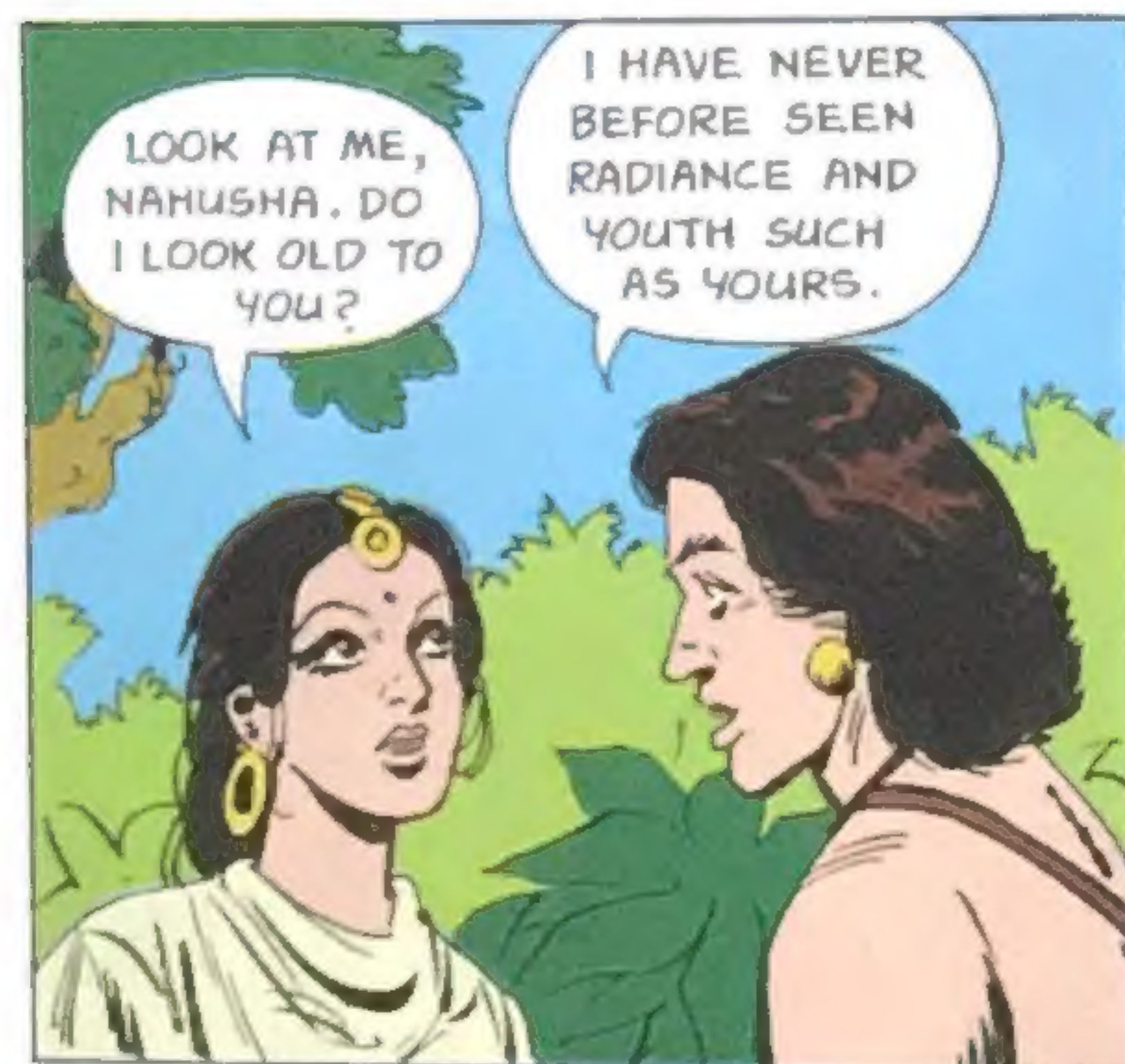


GOOD LADY,
HE WILL
TROUBLE YOU
NO MORE.



YOU HAVE KILLED
HUNDA AS WILLED BY
DESTINY. NOW...
WILL YOU MARRY
ME, AS DESTINY
HAS WILLED?

I WOULD HAVE
READILY MARRIED
YOU. BUT I AM TOO...
YOU ARE OLDER
...MUCH OLDER.



LOOK AT ME,
NAHUSHA. DO
I LOOK OLD TO
YOU?

I HAVE NEVER
BEFORE SEEN
RADIANCE AND
YOUTH SUCH
AS YOURS.



AND I WILL ALWAYS
REMAIN SO. I DO NOT
AGE AS HUMANS DO.
YET, IT IS TO A
HUMAN THAT I HAVE
LOST MY HEART.

ASHOKASUNDARI!!

FILLED WITH HAPPINESS,
NAHUSHA MARRIED
ASHOKASUNDARI.

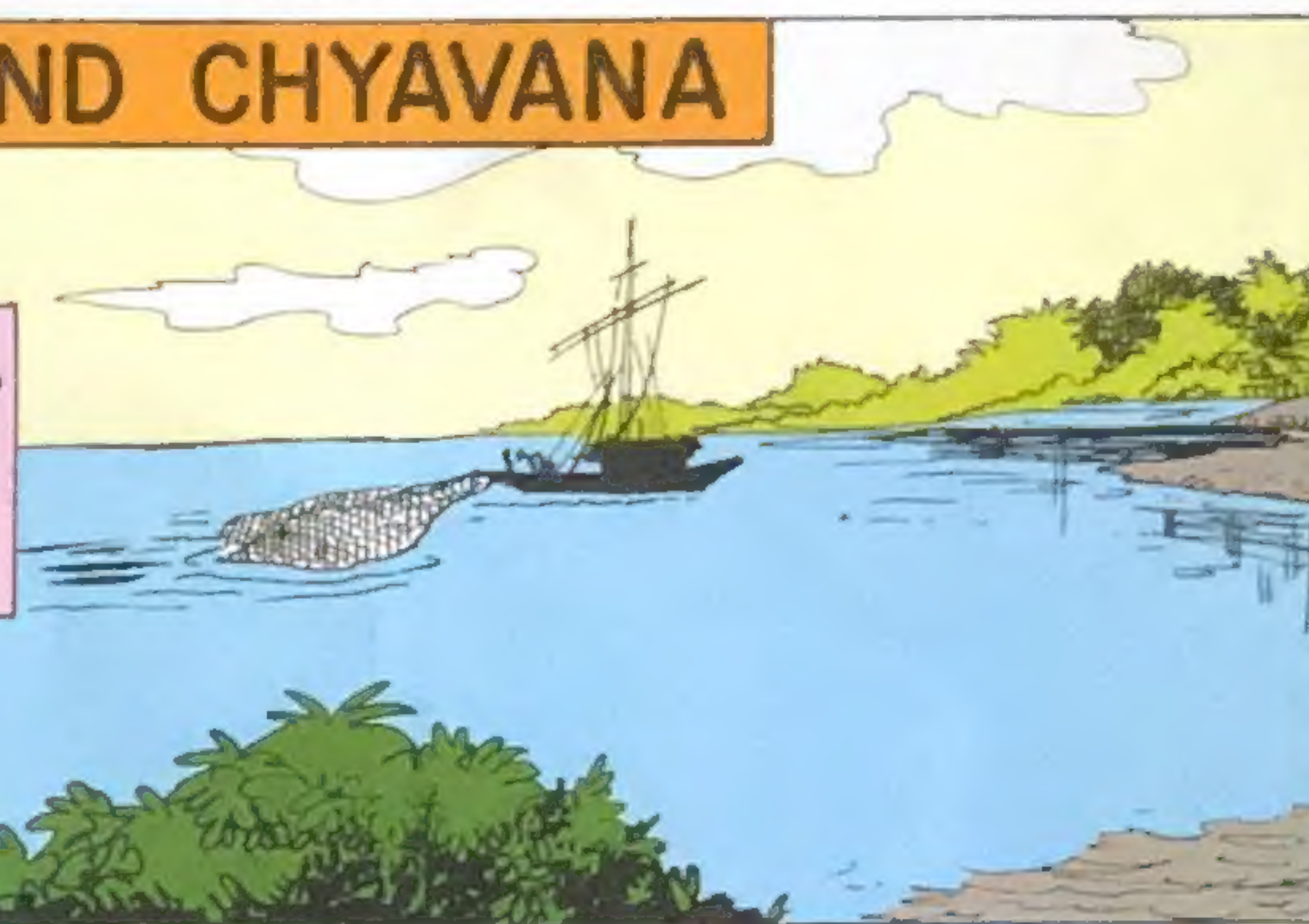


THEY THEN WENT TO HIS
FATHER'S KINGDOM, WHERE
SON AND PARENTS WERE
UNITED ONCE MORE.

IN COURSE OF TIME,
AHUS DIED AND
NAHUSHA SUCCEEDED
HIM.

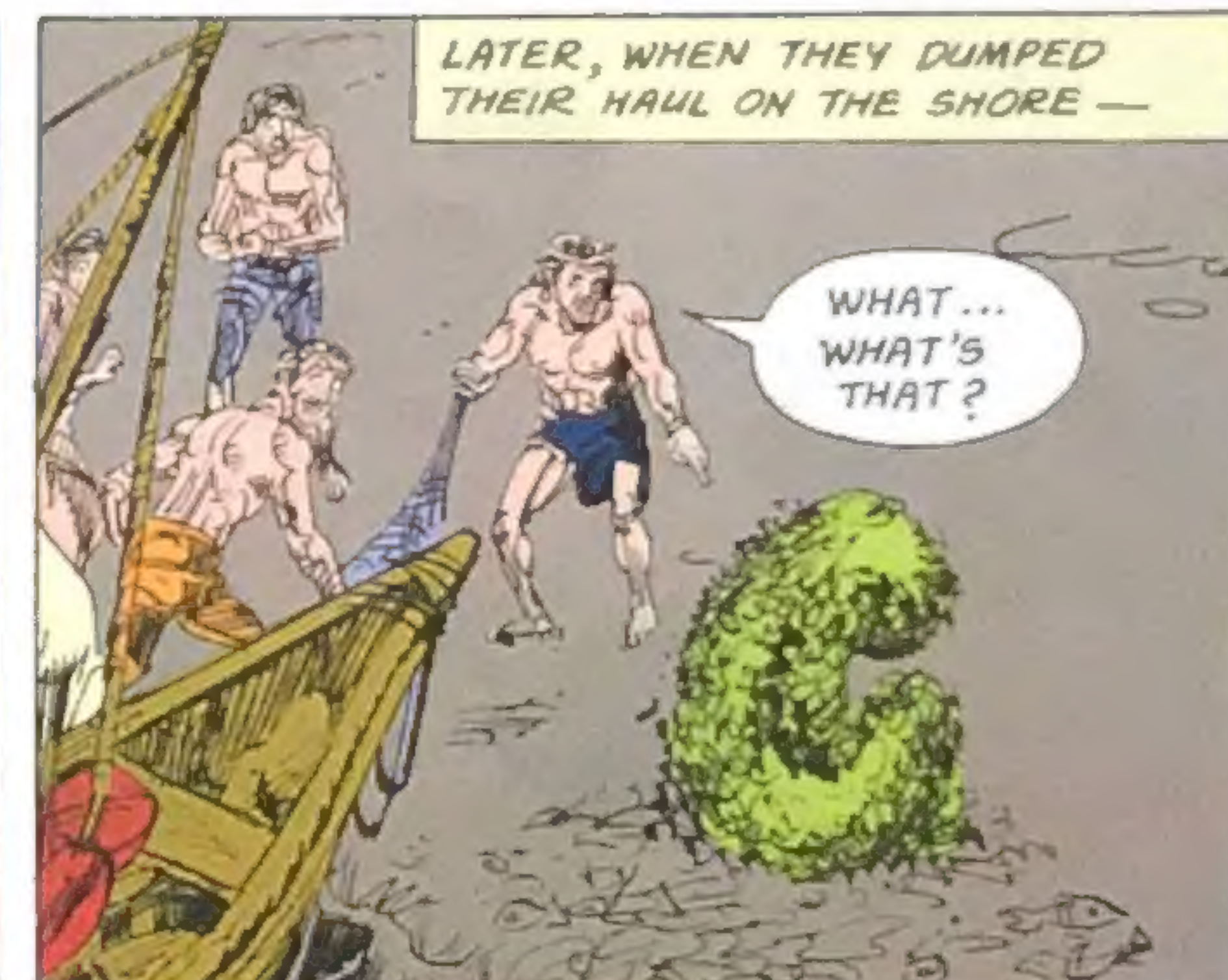
NAHUSHA AND CHYAVANA

ONE DAY, IN THE KINGDOM
OF NAHUSHA, THE BRAVE AND
BROAD-CHESTED KAIVARTAS
OF PRAYAG, CAST THEIR
NETS FOR THEIR DAILY
CATCH OF FISH.



ALL RIGHT.
NOW—
PULL!

UNH!
UNH!



LATER, WHEN THEY DUMPED
THEIR HAUL ON THE SHORE —

WHAT...
WHAT'S
THAT?



E-E-AAAH...!

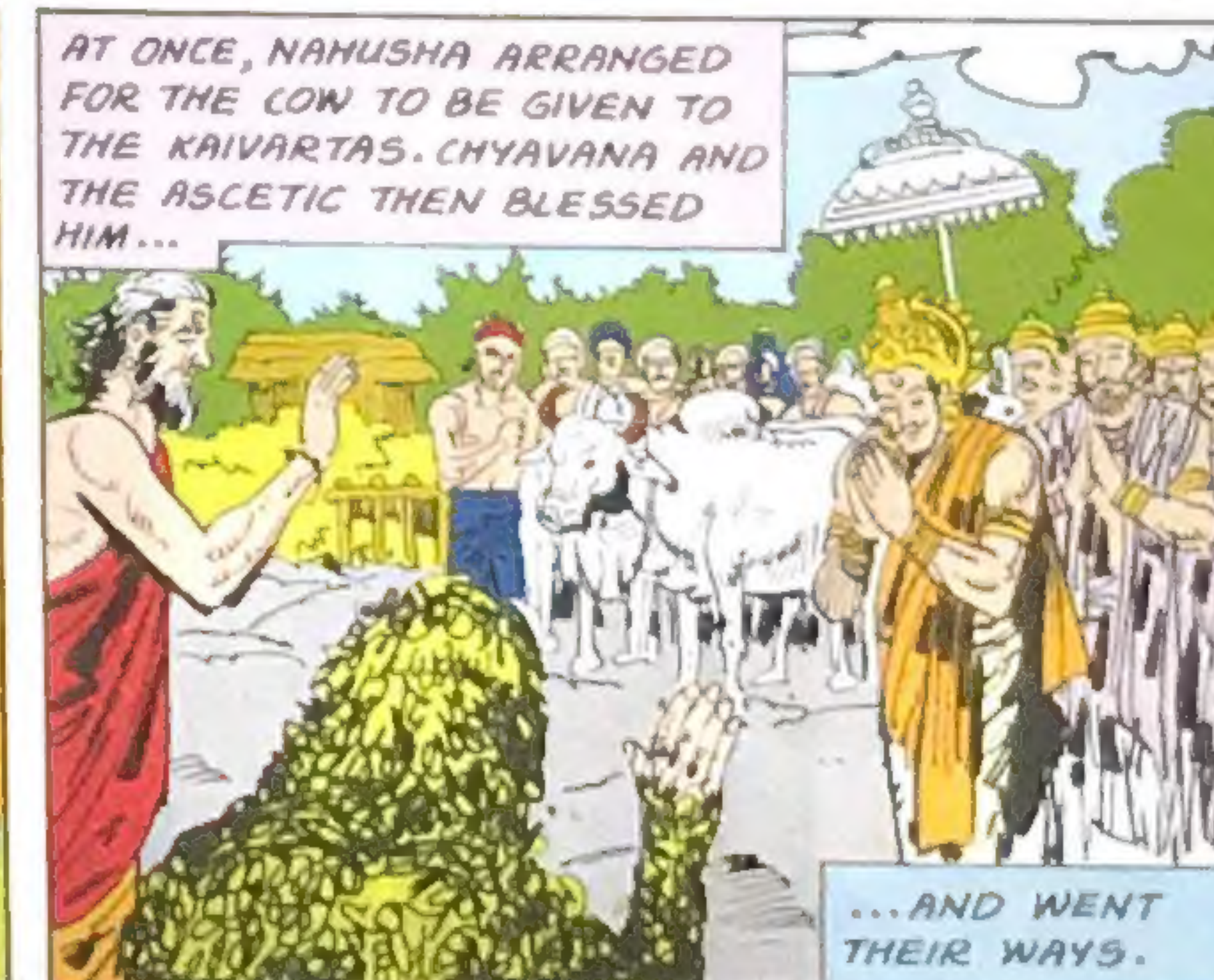
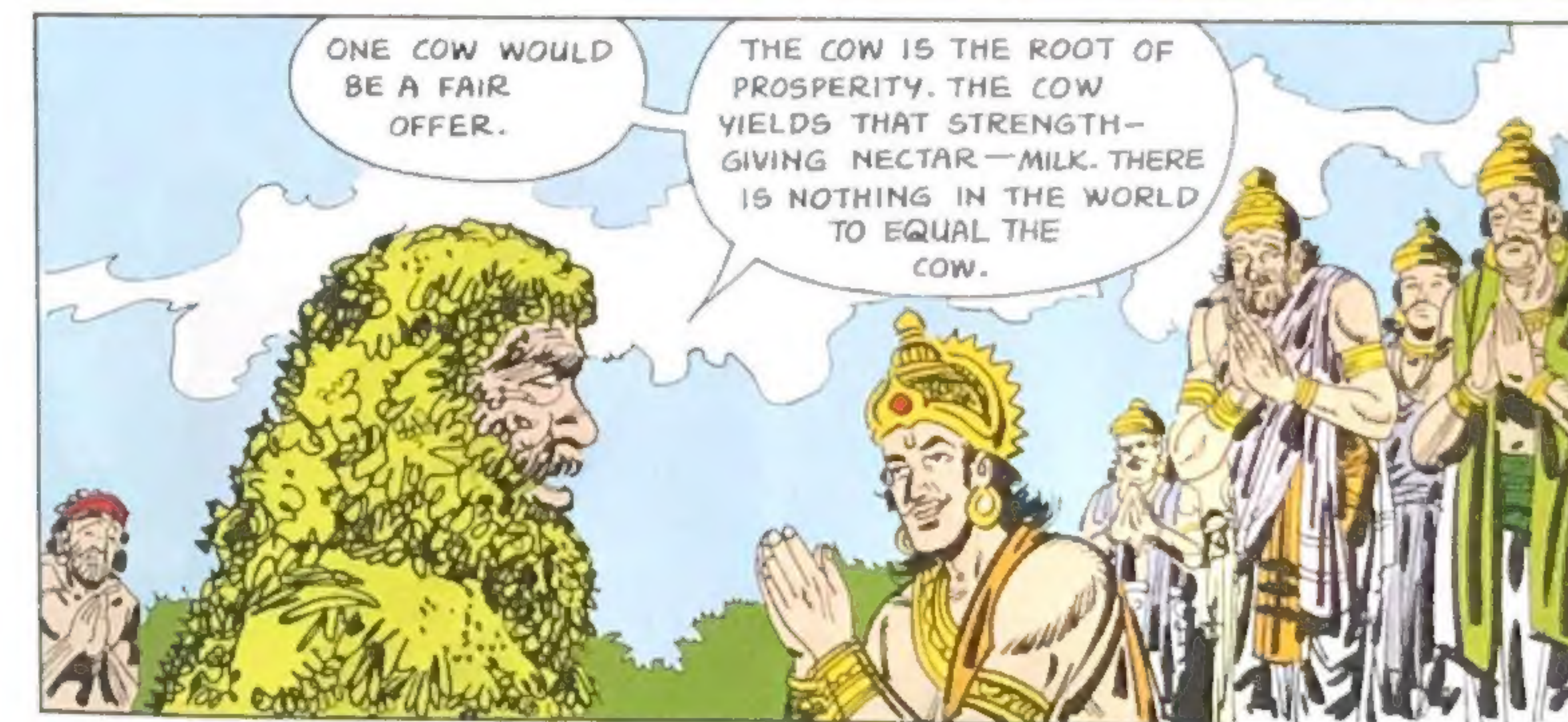


GOOD MEN, DO
NOT BE AFRAID.
I AM SAGE
CHYAVANA.



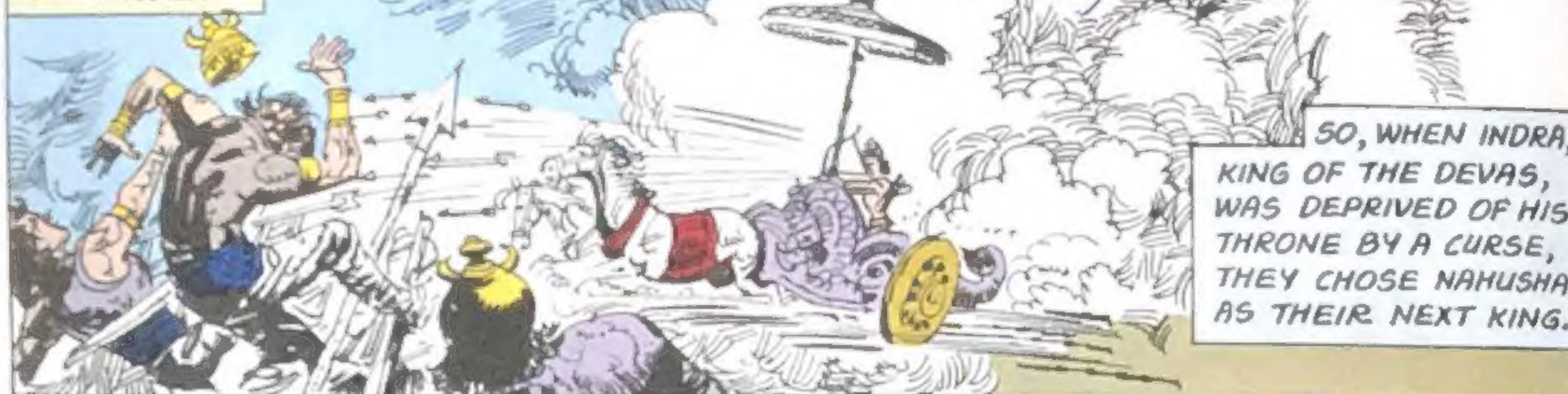
* LIVING IN WATER





THE CURSE

NAHUSHA WAS THE IDEAL KING. BY HIS GOOD DEEDS AND UNMATCHED VALOUR, HE DAZZLED EVEN THE DENIZENS OF HEAVEN.



SO, WHEN INDRA, KING OF THE DEVAS, WAS DEPRIVED OF HIS THRONE BY A CURSE, THEY CHOSE NAHUSHA AS THEIR NEXT KING.

HAVING INVITED HIM TO HEAVEN, THE DEVAS GRANTED NAHUSHA MANY BOONS AND GAVE HIM THE NECTAR OF IMMORTALITY TO DRINK.



THEN BRAHMA BLESSED HIM WITH THE MOST POWERFUL BOON OF ALL.

MAY ALL WHO COME WITHIN THE RANGE OF YOUR VISION BE DEPRIVED OF THEIR ENERGY AND COME UNDER YOUR SWAY.



DESPITE ALL THIS, NAHUSHA, WITH HUMBLE DEVOTION, CONTINUED TO WORSHIP THE DEVAS AS HE HAD DONE ON EARTH...



...AND IN THE COURT, THE DEVAS BOWED TO HIM.

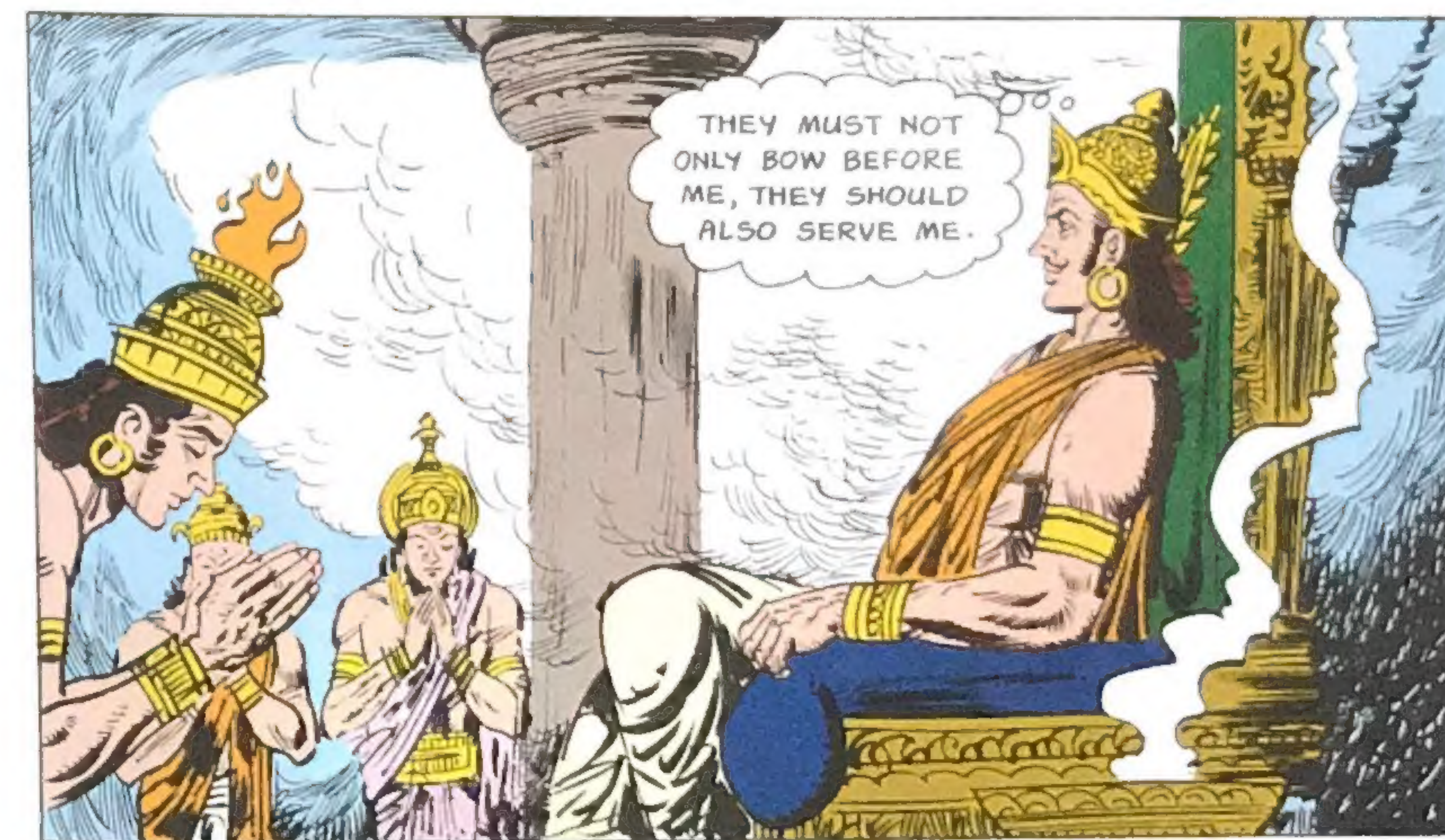


AND SO IT WENT ON

THEN ONE DAY IN THE MIDST OF HIS WORSHIP NAHUSHA SUDDENLY STOPPED AND OPENED HIS EYES.



WHY AM I WORSHIPPING THE DEVAS? I AM THEIR KING.



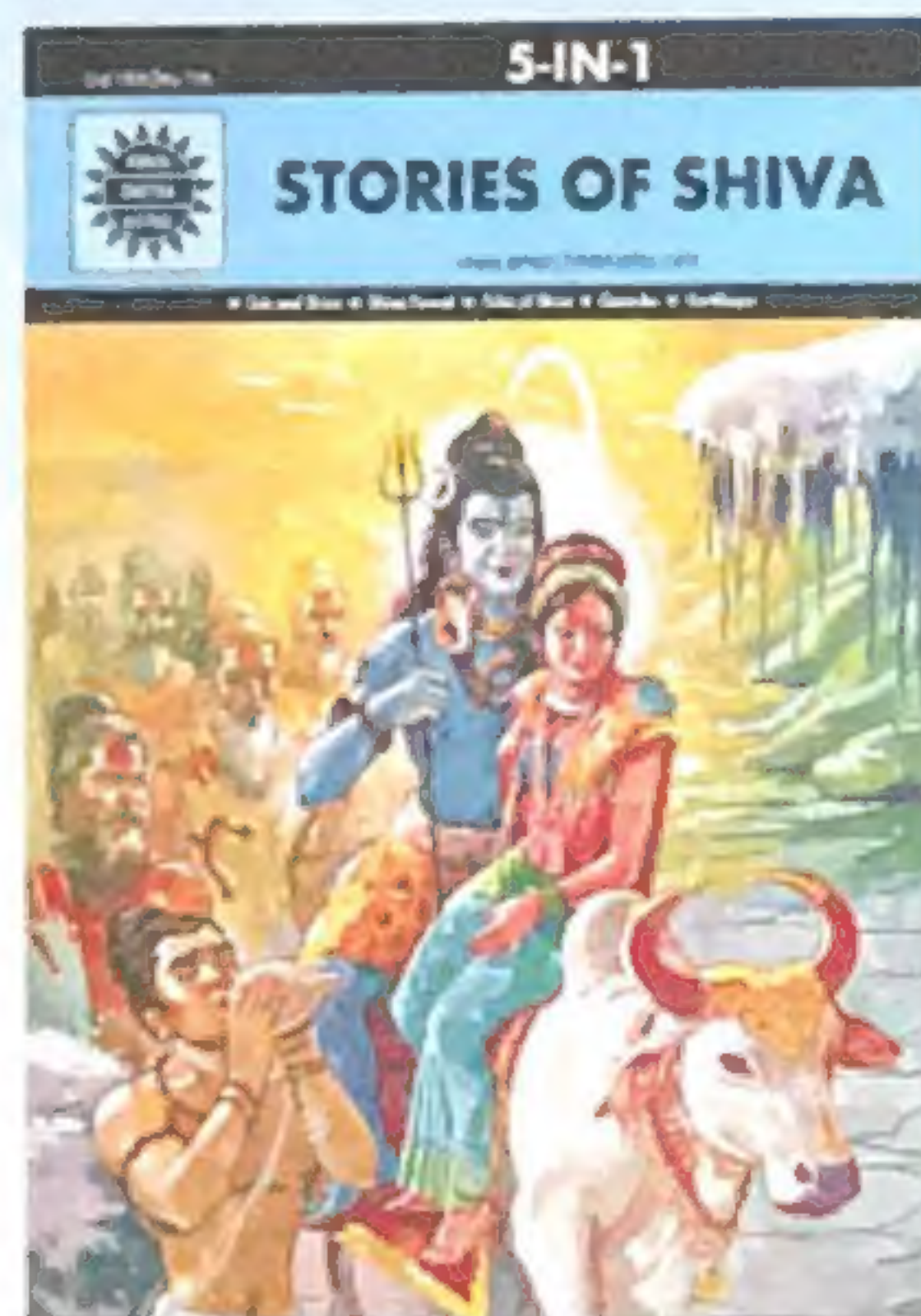
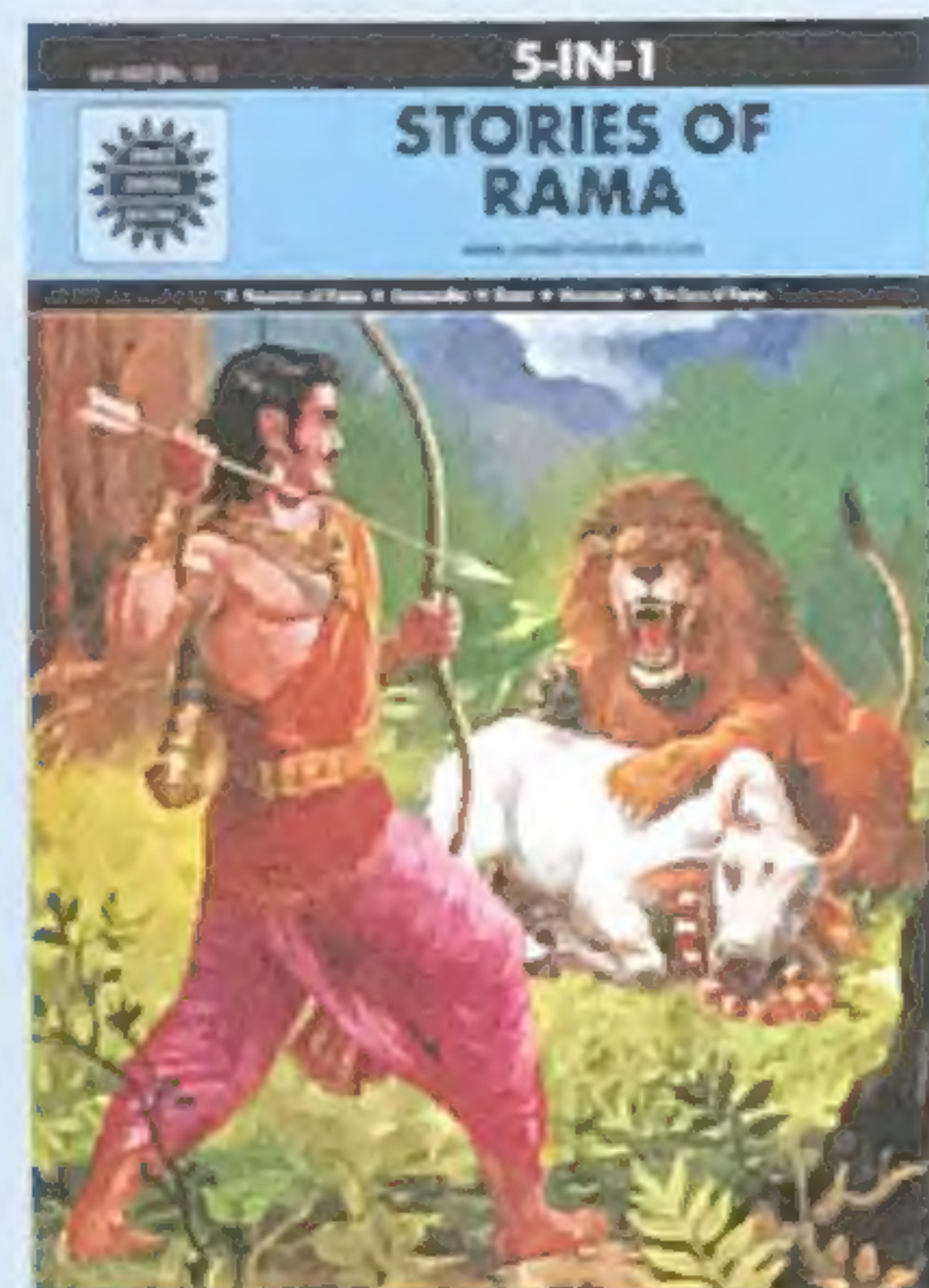
THEY MUST NOT ONLY BOW BEFORE ME, THEY SHOULD ALSO SERVE ME.



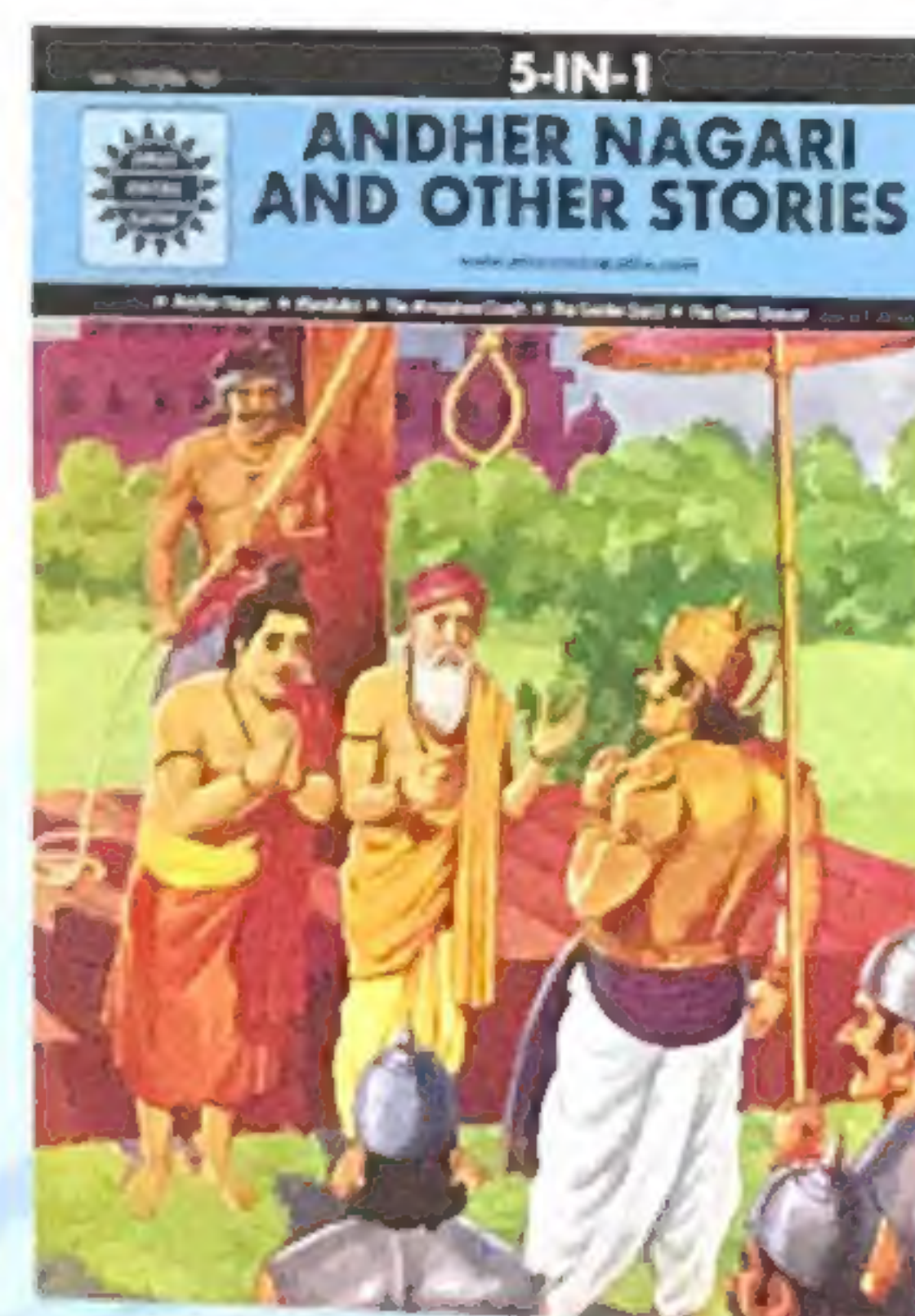
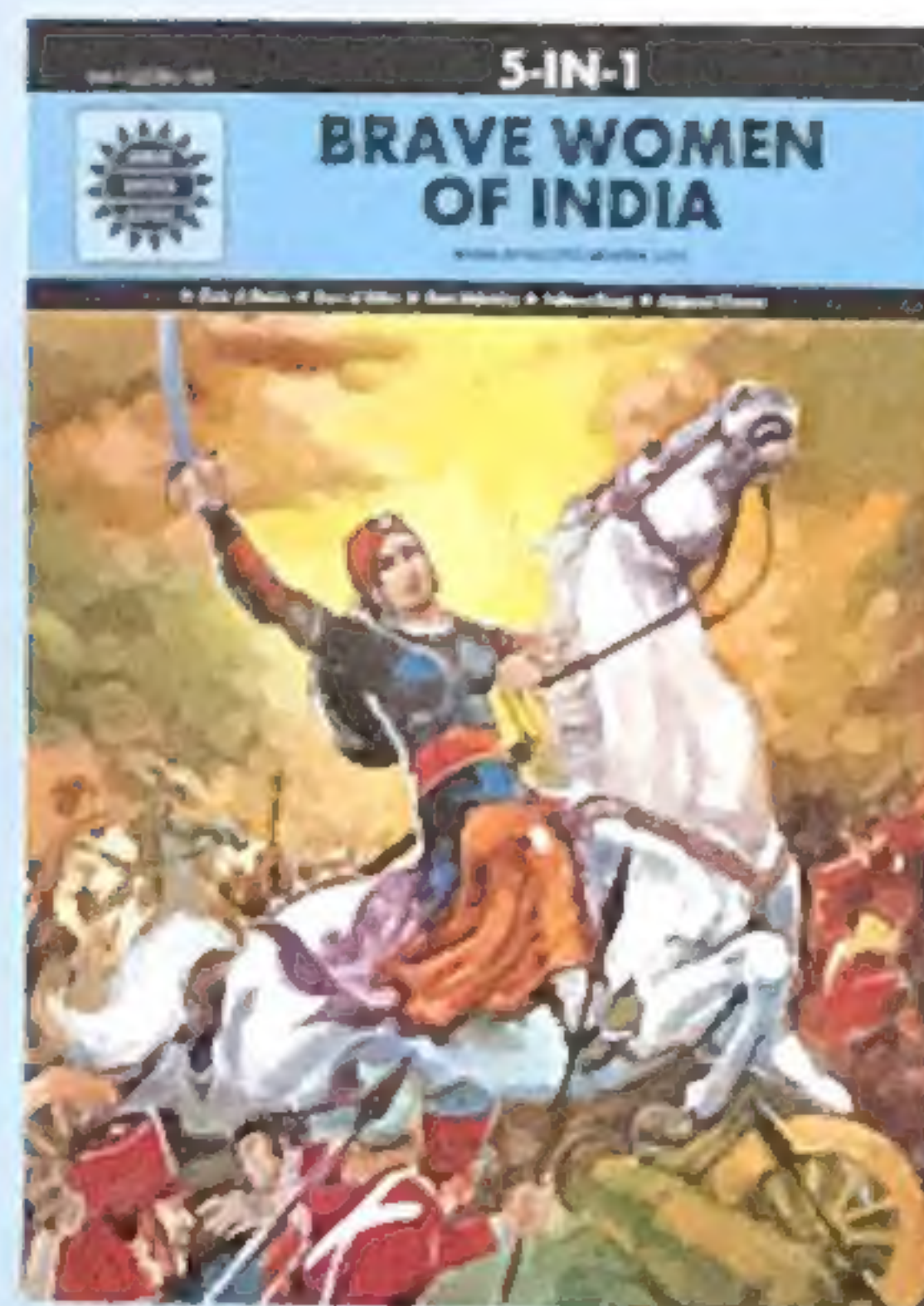
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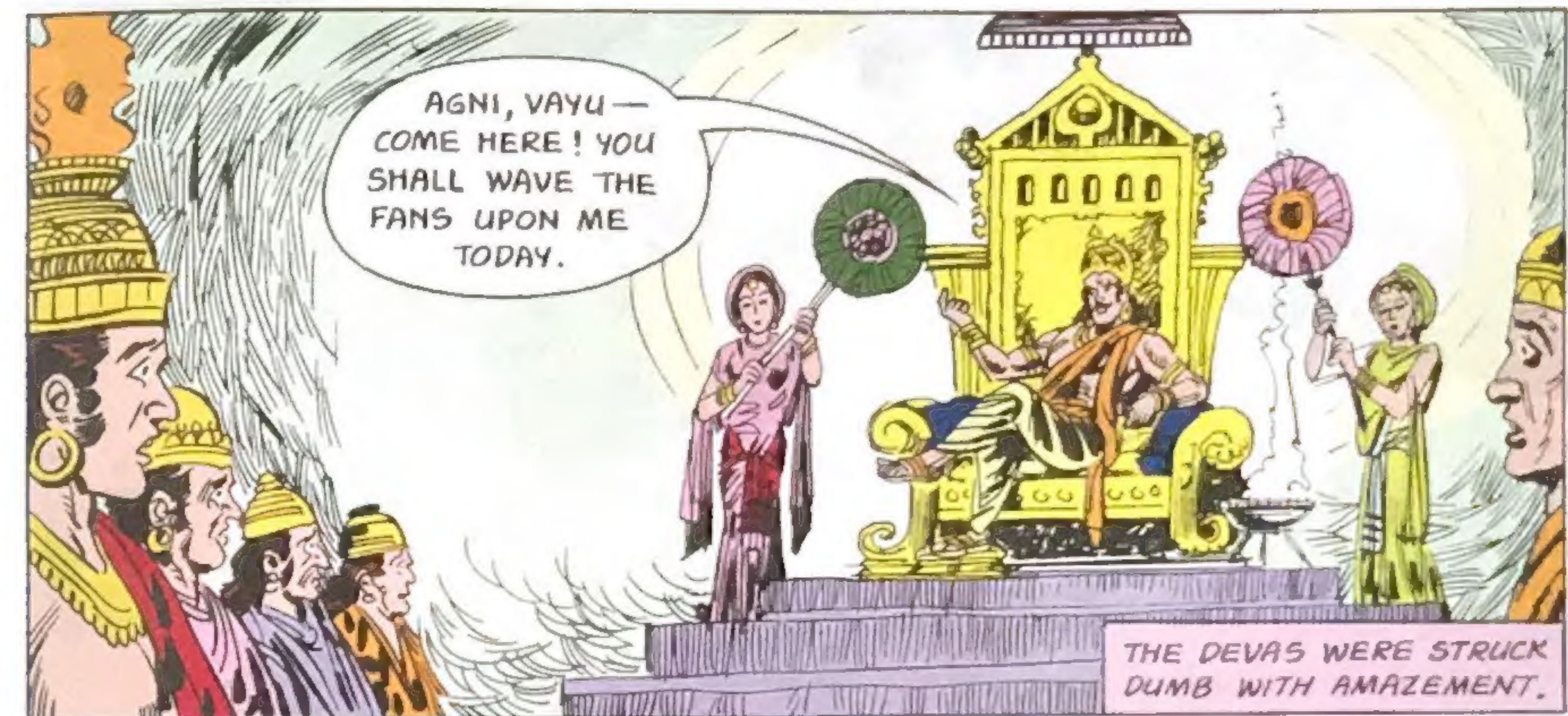
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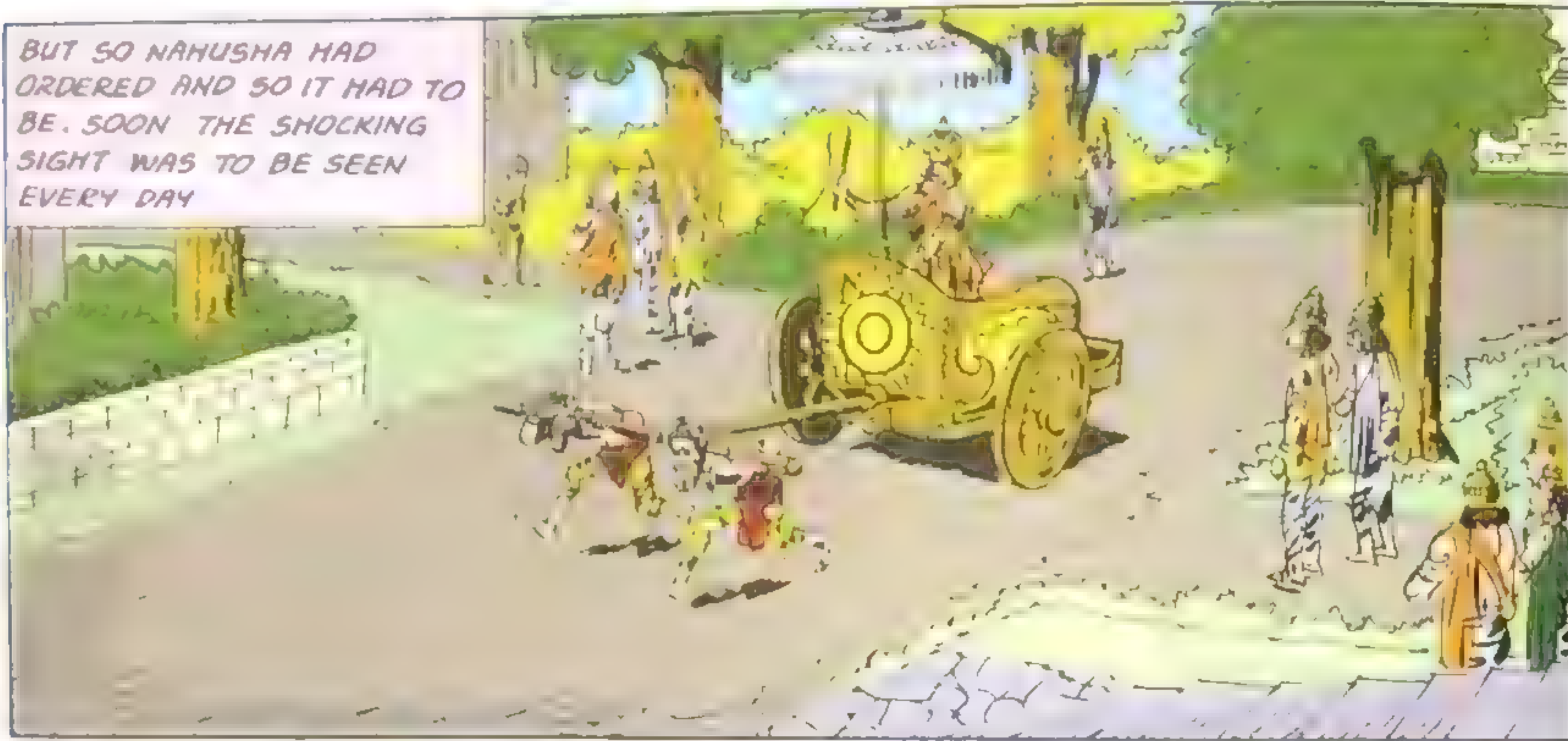
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NAHUSHA



BUT SO NAHUSHA HAD ORDERED AND SO IT HAD TO BE. SOON THE SHOCKING SIGHT WAS TO BE SEEN EVERY DAY



COME ON! MOVE FASTER!

CRACK!



NAHUSHA-BEWARE! YOU ARE TEMPTING FATE...



HUH? DID YOU SAY SOMETHING?

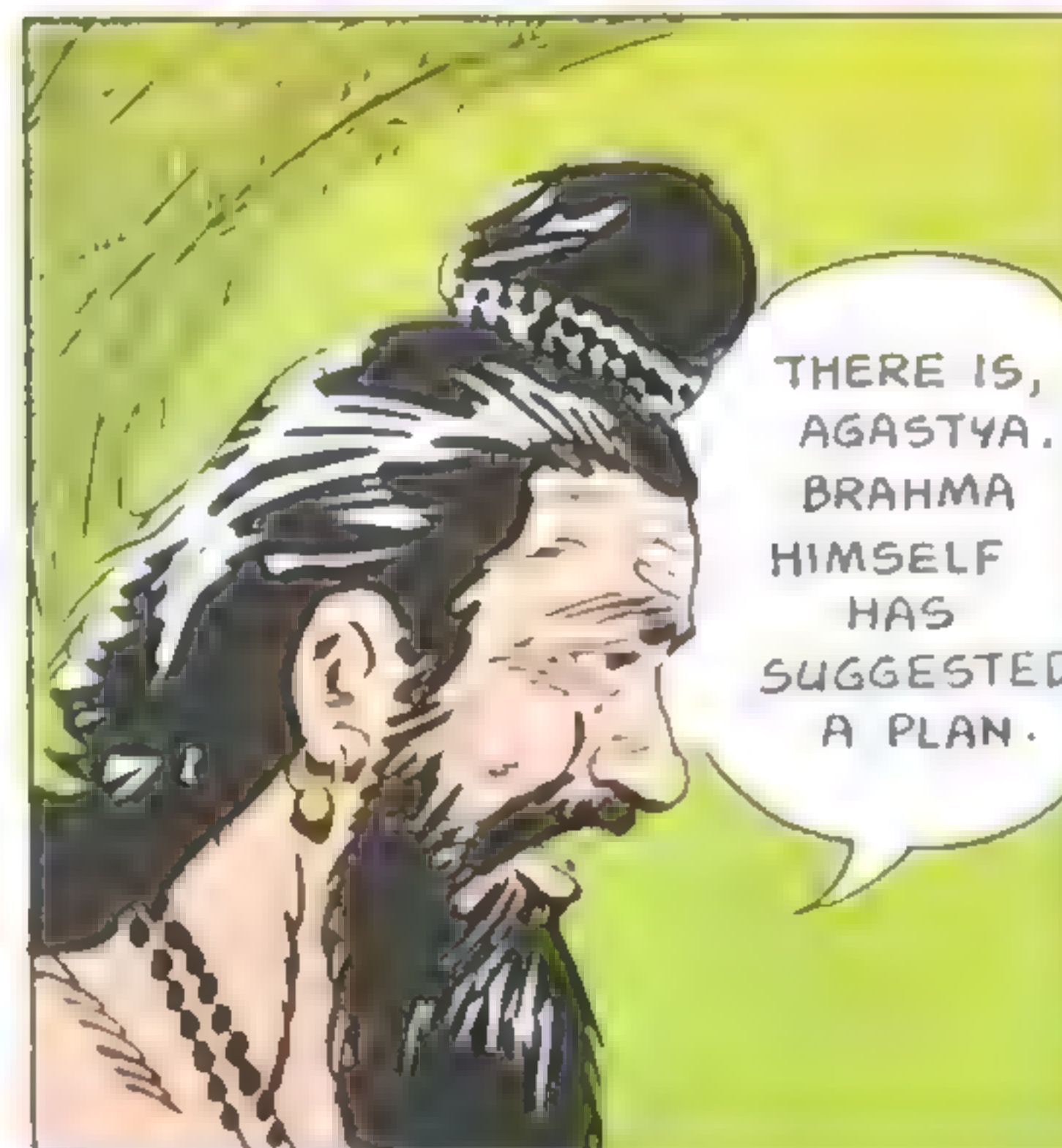
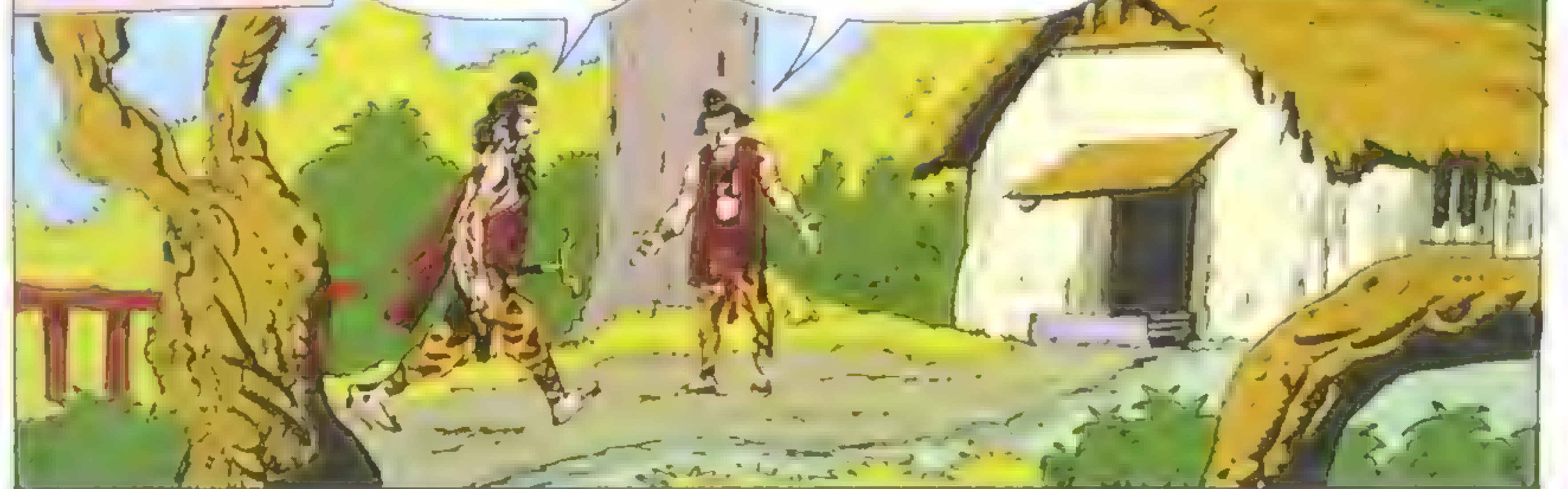


NO... NO.

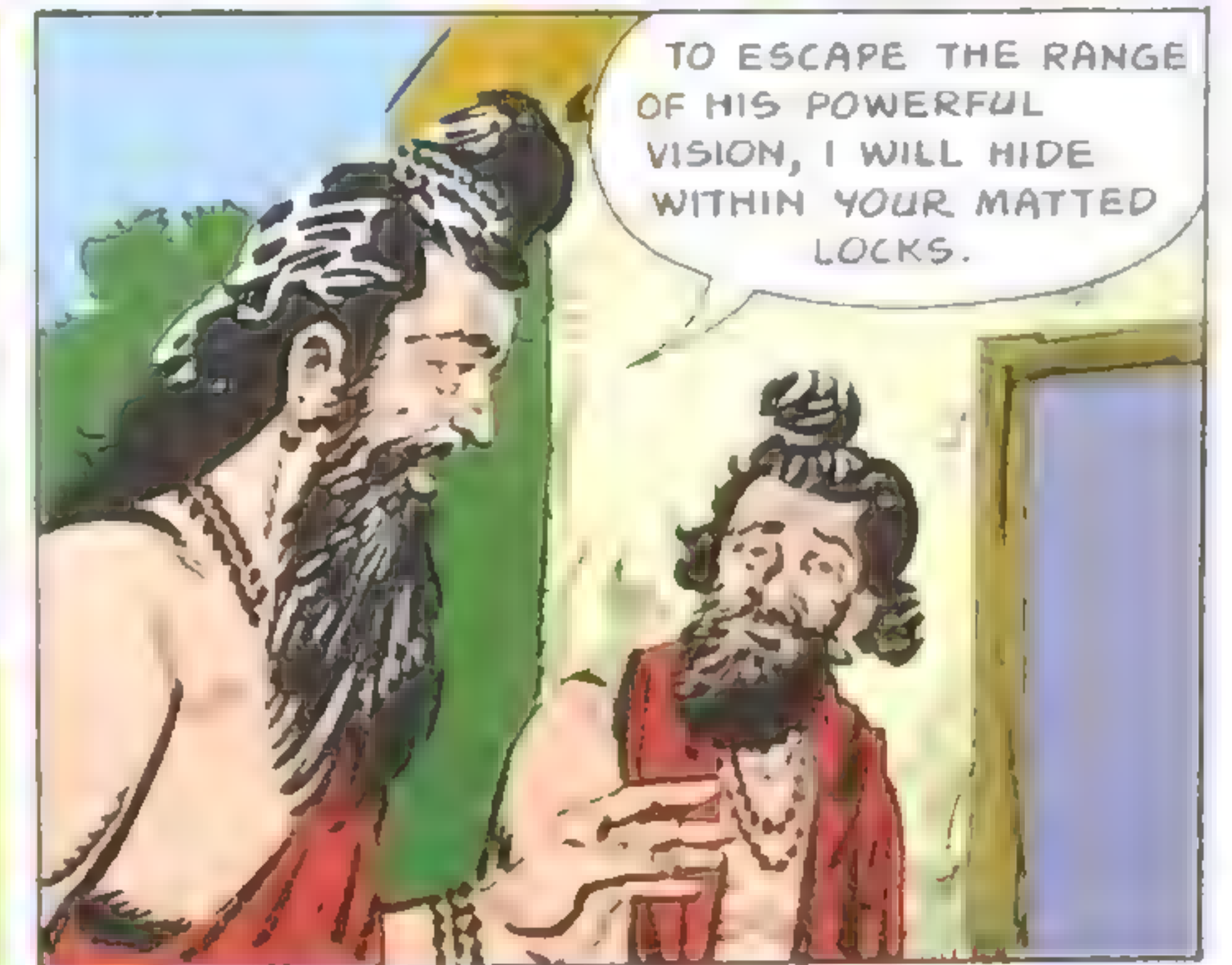
THE SAGES WERE IN A QUANDARY. FINALLY, SAGE BHRIGU CAME ONE DAY TO SAGE AGASTYA.

O AGASTYA, TODAY, IT IS YOUR TURN TO PULL NAHUSHA'S CHARIOT. WILL YOU TOO PUT UP WITH THIS INSULT?

I HAVE NO CHOICE BHRIGU. BECAUSE OF BRAHMA'S BOON AND THE NECTAR NAHUSHA HAS DRUNK, WE ARE POWERLESS BEFORE HIM. THERE IS NOTHING WE CAN DO.



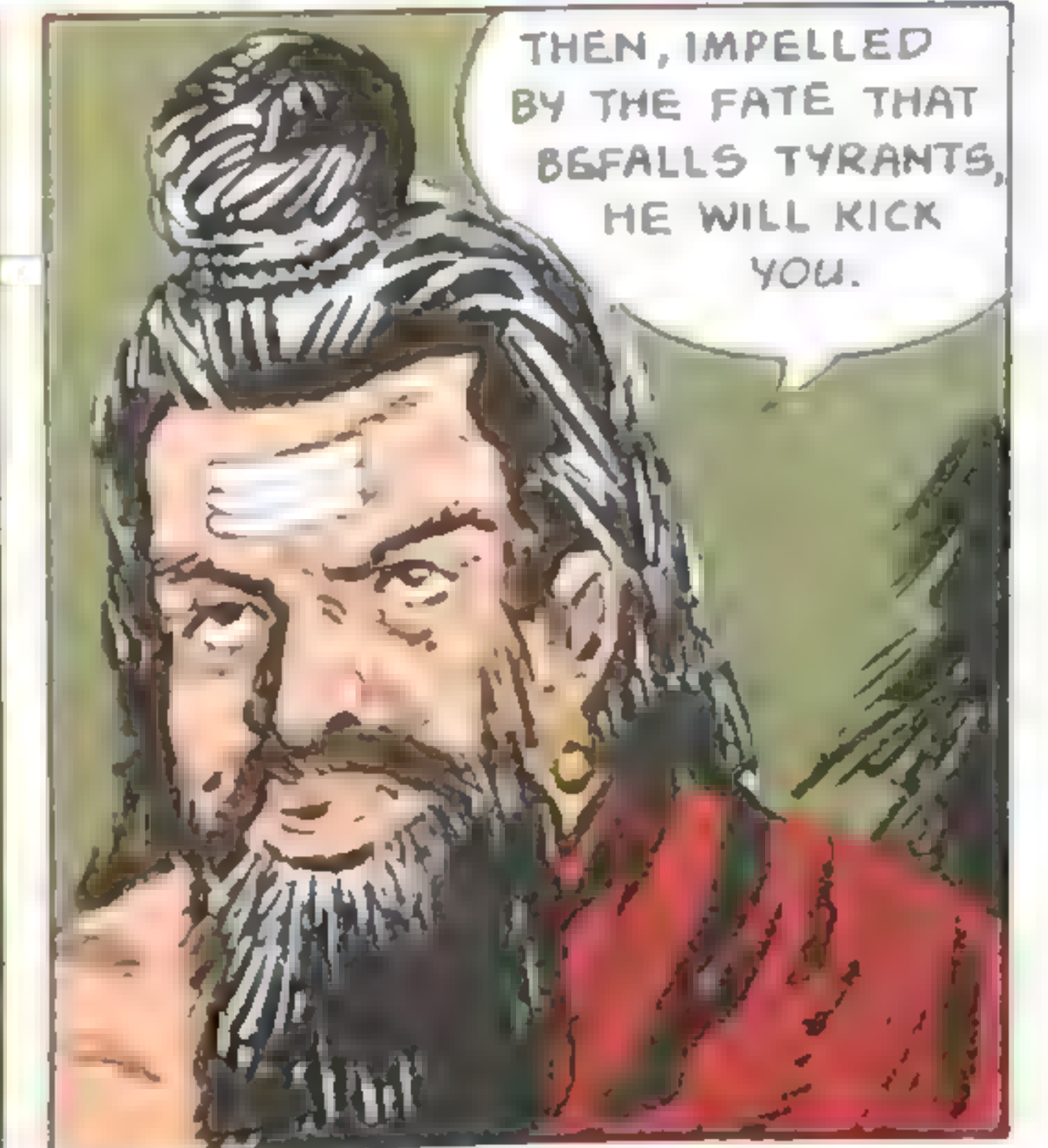
THERE IS, AGASTYA. BRAHMA HIMSELF HAS SUGGESTED A PLAN.



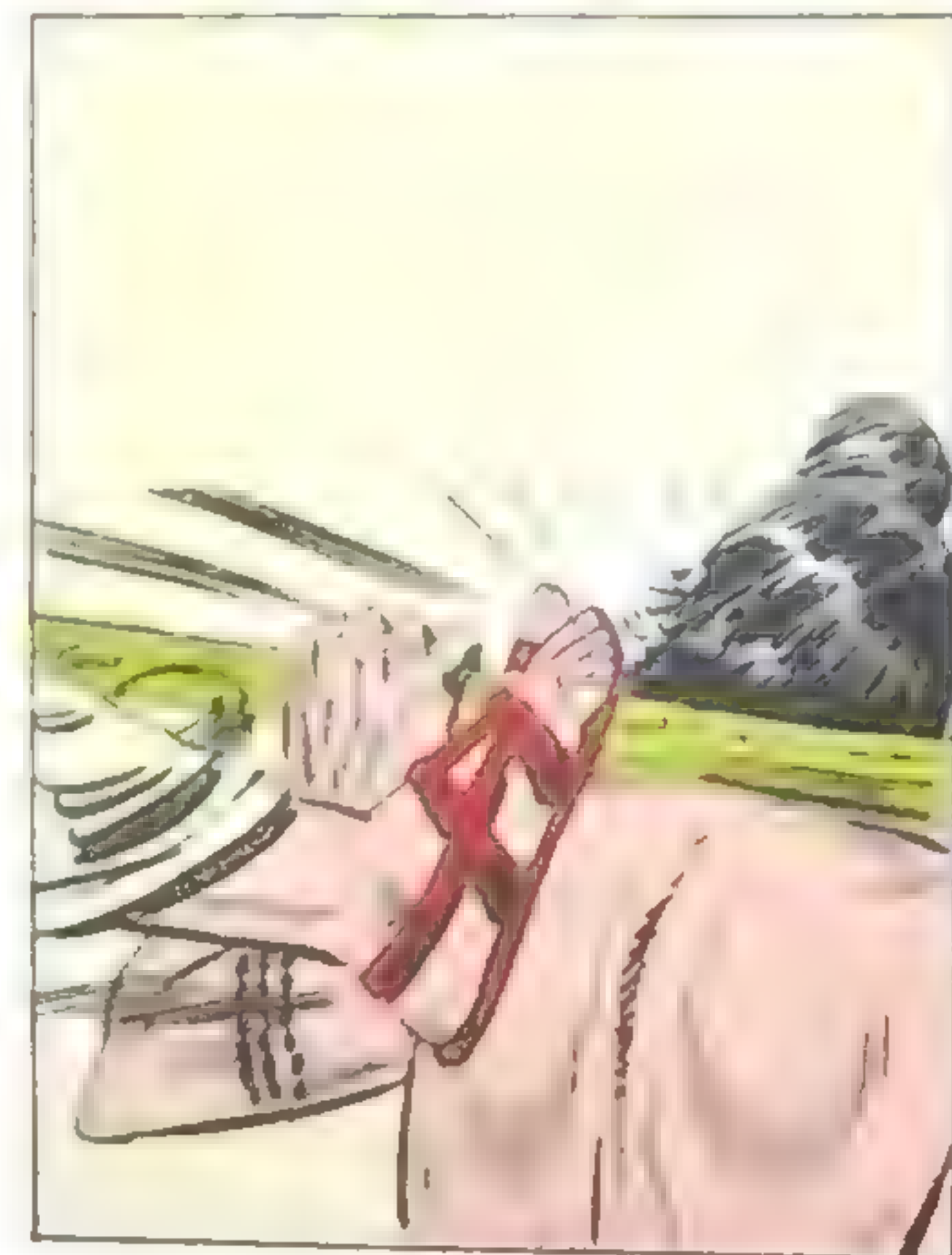
TO ESCAPE THE RANGE OF HIS POWERFUL VISION, I WILL HIDE WITHIN YOUR MATTED LOCKS.



WHEN YOU ARE YOKED TO HIS CHARIOT, NAHUSHA WILL ORDER YOU TO MOVE. DO NOT MOVE.



THEN, IMPELLED BY THE FATE THAT BEFALLS TYRANTS, HE WILL KICK YOU.



AND NAHUSHA CAME HURLING DOWN TOWARDS EARTH.



BUT BECAUSE OF HIS EARLIER HUMILITY AND DEVOTION, NAHUSHA RETAINED THE MEMORY OF HIS BYGONE DAYS. AND NOW, SHAME AND REMORSE CAME TO HIM.

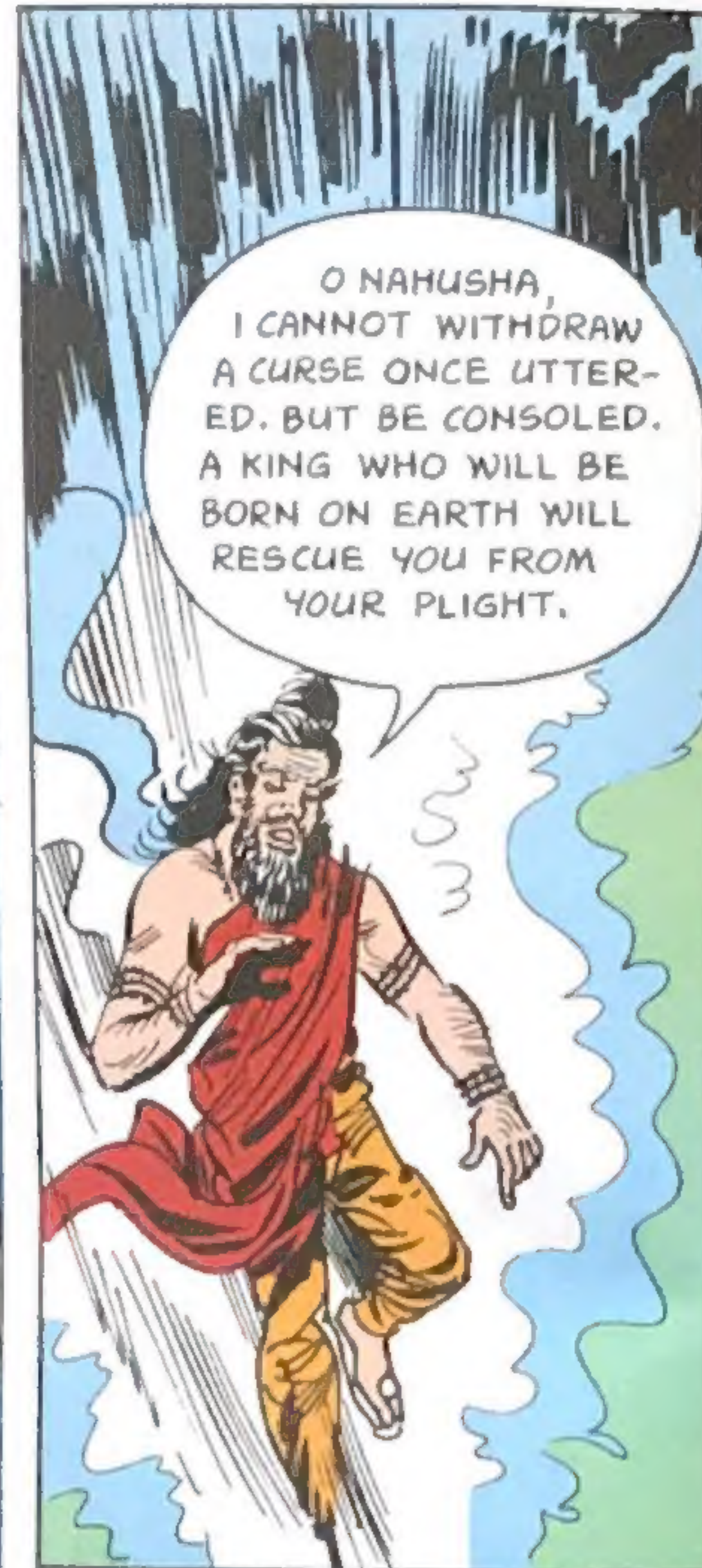


O SAGES,
O DEVAS,
FORGIVE
ME!

NAHUSHA'S DEEP AND SINCERE PRAYERS ROSE UP TO HEAVEN. IN COMPASSION, AGASTYA TURNED TO BHRIGU.

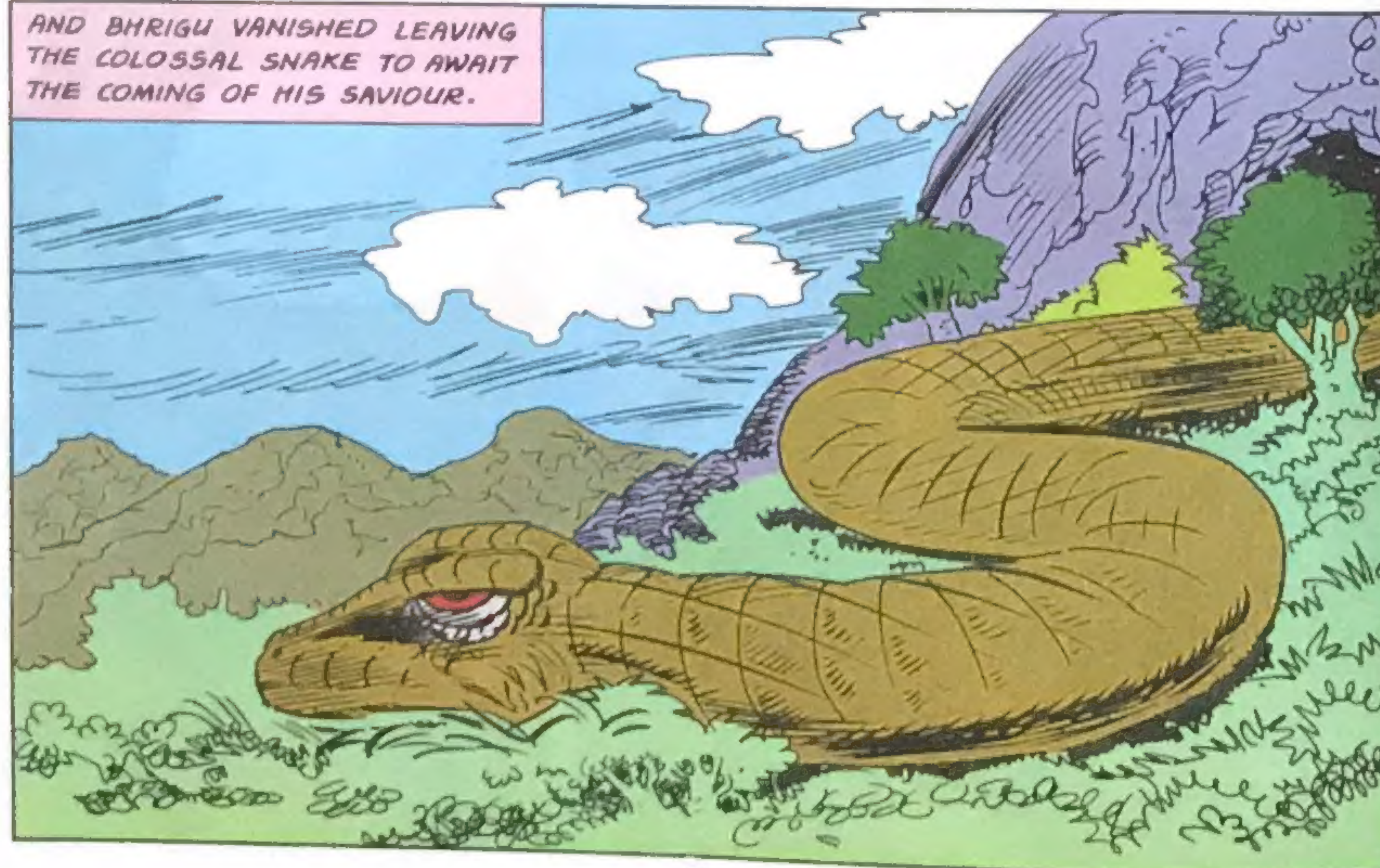


POOR MAN!
HE IS TRULY
PENITENT.
PLEASE SOFTEN
THE CURSE.



O NAHUSHA,
I CANNOT WITHDRAW
A CURSE ONCE UTTERED.
BUT BE CONSOLED.
A KING WHO WILL BE
BORN ON EARTH WILL
RESCUE YOU FROM
YOUR FLIGHT.

AND BHRIGU VANISHED LEAVING THE COLOSSAL SNAKE TO AWAIT THE COMING OF HIS SAVIOUR.



NAHUSHA AND YUDHISHTHIRA

EXILED BY THEIR TREACHEROUS COUSINS THE KAURAVAS, THE PANDAVAS — YUDHISHTHIRA, BHEEMA, ARJUNA, NAKULA AND SAHADEVA — WITH THEIR WIFE DRAUPADI, WERE LIVING IN A HERMITAGE IN THE FOREST.



ONE DAY, BHEEMA DECIDED TO ROAM THE JUNGLES. HE SET OFF, EXULTING IN THE NATURAL BEAUTY AROUND HIM.



BREAKING DOWN TREES, STAMPING ON THE GROUND AND ROARING LOUDLY, HE WENT DEEPER AND DEEPER INTO THE JUNGLE...



... FRIGHTENING THE ANIMALS BY HIS VIGOUR AND VOICE.

THE SCENERY CHANGED FROM GREEN TO BROWN. BRACKISH POOLS LAY ON THE DRY, THORNY GROUND. TOWERING ROCKS ROSE INTO THE SKY. BUT BHEEMA CONTINUED ONWARD.



SUDDENLY, HIS HAIR STOOD ON END.



THE NEXT MOMENT—



LET ME GO!
LET ME...

THOSE EYES...
THEY MAKE ME
WEAK... FAINT...
POWERLESS...



AND BHEEMA LOST CONSCIOUSNESS.



MEANWHILE, BACK AT THE HERMITAGE, YUDHISHTHIRA WAS WORRIED.

CROWS CAWING...
JACKALS HOWLING...
THE WIND DRY AND
FULL OF GRIT...
THESE ARE BAD
OMENS!



DRAUPADI,
WHERE IS
BHEEMA?



HE WENT OUT
QUITE SOME TIME
AGO.



ARJUNA! STAND
GUARD OVER DRAUPADI.
NAKULA! SAHADEVA!
YOU PROTECT THE
DWELLERS OF THE
HERMITAGE.



YUDHISHTHIRA THEN TURNED TO
THEIR PRIEST, DHAUMYA.

GURUDEV, I AM GOING
IN SEARCH OF
BHEEMA.



I WILL
COME WITH
YOU.

THEY SET OUT.

LOOK! BHEEMA
HAS LEFT A TRAIL.
WE WILL FOLLOW
IT.



